

THE
Conformist's fourth Plea
FOR THE
Nonconformists.

WHEREIN

Several Considerations are offered for
Christian Forbearance,

WITH

Some Relations of some of their SUFFERINGS,
humbly submitted to Authority, in order to move
Compassion.

Together with

Some Account of the Infamous Lives and Lamentable Deaths
of some INFORMERS, &c.

By a Charitable and Compassionate CONFORMIST,
Author of the former PLEAS.

K. Charles I. *ΒΑΣΙΛ. ΜΟΔ. 27.*

*The King's Prerogative is best served and exercised in remitting, rather than
exacting the Rigor of the Laws, there being nothing worse than Legal
Tyranny.*

His Majesty's Gracious Speech, Feb. 5. 1672.

*— I put forth my Declaration for Indulgence to Dissenters, and I have
thither found the good Effect of it. —*

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. D. for Jonathan Robinson, at the Golden Lion,
in St. Paul's Church-Yard, MDC LXXXIII.

Nonconformists.



By a Committee and Corporation of Nonconformists.
Author of the former Treatise.

LONDON: Printed by J. G. ALLEN, in the Strand, near St. Dunstons Church.

The Epistle to the Reader.

IT is as much in the Reader's power to read, or to forbear with Contempt, as to buy or not to buy: He knows that I, and the Book-seller can't impose upon him: if he overlook, or despise me, he saves both his Money and his Time, and he may spare his Censures of Affection or any other Fault, except he certainly know it, with as much Kindness to himself, as Justice to me. I owe such Men no account of my self, or of the Multiplication of these Pleas; but they that will be pleased to read them, will accept the Reason of the Number, as well as the Thing. When I had written the first, I thought I had done with the Argument, except called upon to vindicate, or confirm, to explain, or to correct what requires Correction. But when I had said all I thought fit to say, it was without any cause at all given by me, reported that I had written a Second Plea, and the Second Plea was enquired after before it was conceived in my Mind. Upon notice of this, I considered if this might be an Invitation or Call to view, and to give my sense of their Sufferings with respect to publick Benefit, by a Cessation of their many Troubles, and Liberty to preach the Gospel. I was confined to Brevity in that which yet was too large for many. In it I did state the Case as truly and distinctly as possibly I could, and laboured to inform the Reader, both historically and rationally: I looked upon the historical Part as obscure, because short; and upon the rational as too weak, wanting the Authority of Testimony, and consent of the Eminent Writers of our Church. And because I saw the Incredulity of the Right Reverend Bishop of Cork, who drew my Estimation and Affection to him for his peaceable Design, as if the Sufferings of the Nonconformists were artificially aggravated to an evil end, I thought three things necessary to be done: 1. To run up to the Spring of our Divisions in the Savoy Conference, and gave some Historical Account of Church-Affairs before, and about that time, which I perceived many did not know. 2. To show and compare the Aspects of some of our most Renowned Writers of the Church of England, and our Dissenting Protestants towards the same things, of very great moments and tendency to Peace. 3. To represent some of the many Sufferings of Divines of known Loyalty, merely for Nonconformity, to this end, that their Sufferings might affect Authority, and incline Men's Minds to Mercy and Forbearance. For while their Sufferings are slighted, and their Cause despised, and odiously

The Epistle to the Reader.

exposed as it commonly is, there is no hope of Reconciliation, nor Abatement of their Sufferings, nor of any Concessions to make their Admission easy and comfortable. And all this was done together, and referred to the ingenious and honest Bookseller, who being the proper Judge of his own Affairs, concluded it best to divide the whole into two Parts; and so that which was a Supplement to the Second Plea, is called the Third, and that which was a part of the Third, is called the Fourth Plea. This account I thought good to give of the Number, to them who are not displeased with the Argument, but with the Number. But it will be more difficult to satisfy them who are displeased with the Argument itself. And of this I have here and there drapt a Reason, besides a kind of Apology, in the Second, which I think took up too much room; and therefore I shall not run out here. My Design is thoroughly known to Him, whose Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, to whom I must give my last Account, and receive my final Judgment, after that Men have talk'd and done their Pleasure: I do humbly beg his Forgiveness for all Failings; and of Men, when any shall convince me of any Injury which I have ignorantly and unwillingly done, if any be done. I do verily believe the Argument is a needful Argument: and had the Management of it been answerable to it's Importance, and by a better hand, I should have more rejoiced to read it, than now I can; but yet as it is, I do not repent that I have given my Testimony to the Servants of Christ, nor the Faith and Holiness professed and propagated by them, although some will make it as dear to me as they can. But they and I are in the hands of God, and for their sakes I wish they would not be too bold and free of their Menaces.

There is a noted Person, who affects the Title of Observer. (I am sure, either he is wilfully blind on one side, or he is abused by his Spectacles and Informers) to whom I am indebted. I cannot pass by his Observer upon the Third Plea, Numb. 172. Tory speaks of the Plea; No, no, 'tis not ripe for Violence yet, but he advances very fairly, by way of Preparatory to it, if he can but persuade the Multitude that the five-Mile Act was fram'd and pass'd by Papists. Here's the King now, and the Majority of both Houses, exposed to the Rabble, as a Popish Faction.

Reader, here's Observer now. These Words [fram'd and pass'd by Papists] are not mine, but his.

There is a Dose of his Ingenuity and Goodness wrapt up in the Insinuation, as if I said or meant, as he is bold to report. If I quote my Authors for what I said, or produce my Testimonies, he will not abide me more than them, because Parliament-Men. One worthy Member of the House in the Debate about uniting Protestant Dissenters, appealed to many Members then in the House, who were in that Parliament, as remembering that Act was promoted by Sir Thomas Clifford, Sir Solomon Swale, and Sir Roger Strickland, who all appeared to be Papists.

And

The Epistle to the Reader.

And I could name him some who remember the three Corners of the House of Commons in which these three Popish Agents placed or posted themselves to see that the Votes of their Friends might not fail their Expectations, if not Engagements. Three such leading Men as these were in the House, when thinner than usual because of the Plague, and being then disguised, and afterwards open Papists, was enough to denominate a Popish Faction, and to carry what they contrived, especially pretending a Service to the Church, and by that pretence drawing the unwary Protestant to vote the same way. The Act, and the Oath in the Act was opposed by the eminent Loyal Earl of Southampton Lord Treasurer, and others of the Nobility, and by the eminent Dr. Earl Bishop of Salisbury, and when they of the other Party endeavoured to lay the same Oath upon the whole Kingdom, it was not only opposed by the Loyal, but carried in the Negative by three Votes, which were the now Earl of Lindsey, and the Earl of Danby, and Mr. Perigrine Bartue, who was that day introduced into the House by the other two. And this is sufficient to prove the other part of my Sentence, that it was opposed by the Loyal. It is the first time that I ever read or heard that the King fram'd or passed the Act; (the Acts are passed before they are presented to him) or, which I abhor to think, to be in a Popish Faction; I leave the Scandal where I found it in *Observator*, with more of the same Dy and Tincture. Others there are that may be satisfied with the same Answers, who take it ill that it is remembered the five Mile Act was procured or promoted by Popish Counsels and Endeavours. Had not great and observing Men, who served in Parliaments declared it; I should not have laid any part of my Argument upon it, neither do I think a *Quid pro Quo*, to be an excuse for me, if I had said it, without sufficient Testimony, that they who arraign and damn the Pleas, have given out that the Declaration of Indulgence, was from the same Counsels, and in favour of the Papists. The Kingdom was alarmed with the fears of Popery; and many Preachers were Lecturers upon the Controversies against Popery, as if it had been at the Church doors, and all must be armed against it: His Majesty took notice of it in his Gracious Speech of February 5. 1672. 'I put forth my Declaration for Indulgence to Dissenters, and I have hitherto found the good Effect of it — There is one part in it which hath been subject to Misconstruction, which is that concerning the Papists, as if more Liberty were granted them, than to the other Recusants, when it is plain there is less, &c. 'I do not intend it shall any ways prejudice the Church, but I will support it as Right, and in its full Power. Having said this, I shall take it very ill to receive Contradiction in what I have done; and I will deal plainly with you, I am resolved to stick to my Declaration.

The Lord Chancellor also spake the same thing. 'His Majesty hath so fully vindicated his Declaration from that Calumny concerning the Papists, that no reasonable Scruple can be made by any good Man: He hath sufficiently justified

The Epistle to the Reader.

“it by the time it was published in, and the Effect he both had from it, and might have done it more, from the agreeableness of it to his own natural Disposition, which no good English Man can wish otherwise than it is: He loves not Blood, or rigorous Severities; but where mild or gentle ways may be used by a wise Prince, he is certain to choose them — and concludes that Head thus: But his Majesty is not convinced that violent ways are the Interest of Religion, or the Church. p. 12, 13.

And the same Lord Chancellor, then a great Minister of State, gives his Reasons to his Friend contrary to the Lord Cliford's, why he should think that Indulgence was a favour to the Protestant Dissenters, and for the advantage of the Protestant Religion, which are printed in a Letter from a Person of Quality, p. 5. However, it is clear, many of our Protestant Brethren declared their contrariety to Popery in their Learned Morning Exercises against Popery and otherwise, and do we'll know that one World cannot hold the Papists and them both, if Popery have Power; And our Mittimus will be quickly drawn, after that St. Peter's Successor can come in Goaler, a Place he would purchase at any rate.

But O! how much more happy were it for us to be reconciled, and made one by Christ, by his Spirit, by his Gospel, than be made Friends by him that opposeth himself, and was known in England by the Name of Antichrist, which he can never forget, nor digest? Discerning and good Men are under Apprehensions of Sufferings coming upon us, and write their Preparations; one, a worthy Minister of our Church, for Martyrdom, others for Sufferings; and the excellent Mr. Polhill draws the Face and Aspect of the Times with his curious Pen. Charity is cold, Differences are hot, Moderation vanishes, Enmity every where appears, Popery lifts up its self in the World; Protestants help on the Design by destroying each other. Sin is gone up with a great Cry to Heaven, black Clouds of Wrath hang over our heads for it; the decays of holy Love threaten a remove of our Candlestick; Lukewarmness in Religion shews, that we are fit to be spewed out of God's Mouth: Every one that bathes in his head may see the Tendency of such things as these — Epistle to the Reader before his Armatura Dei.

Our Peace is protracted by the Preservation of One Life, upon which it hangs, which is more worth than ten thousand of us (2 Sam. 18. 3.) often wonderfully preserved from open and latent dangers. But in how many Cities, Corporations and Counties is a Civil War begun! What Contrivances are studied to divide us, and provocations to strike? O who can number or express the division of Hearts amongst us! what Contentions in Parishes? what Inquisitions after Dissenters! They are once again become the Publick Grievance, and great Dangerous Party to be suppressed. The Tide that rose against Popery a few years ago, is turned upon them now: as some have observed it several times before to have done.

The Epistle to the Reader.

Ans. Yea, they are not only driven out of their Meetings, but cannot in some Places, worship God in their own private Families without Spies, yea, more, without Molestation; Suspected evil Designs can not be more narrowly watched, than they are, who fear and worship the God of Heaven. Hence Impiety takes great Boldness and Confidence, and Piety is shut up, and must neither be heard nor seen. I am credibly informed, it is thus for a Time (but how long?) in some Places, since wicked Men see they may take that Course, which scarce any but they will undertake. And this Way of Impiety to discountenance, terrify, and confine or banish true real Piety, is that which I speak against, and direct my Discourse to.

I make not my self wiser than my Rulers, nor do oppose my self against lawful Power, lawfully used by the meanest Officer; but being in some measure affected with the great Piety of many of my Brethren, and their great Sufferings in many kinds, and the Proceedings of most Men against them. Nonconformity is but the Presence; but it is the Gain of something which shall never profit them, nor be blessed unto them; that is aimed at. Who can say, he was ever the better or the richer for the many great Losses of the Sufferers? It were happy for the Informers, if no worse should befall them in this World, (not to speak of the World to come) than happened to two of them, who went to complain, or demand (or both) their Moiety of a Justice of Peace, who commanded them both to be set in the Stocks. Some Instances of the temporal State of these kind of Men are given in the few following Narratives.

Observe the Methods and Manner of the Execution, and the vast Dissimilitude between their observing the Sabbath-Day, and the hunted Dissenters. I do heartily wish all Things were done decently and in order in the Publick Assemblies, and that thither might be the Way of all God's People with one consent: But if that cannot be, without Controversy, to worship God in Christ by one Spirit, to preach one Faith, to join in Praises, to celebrate Sacraments, are more like the Sanctification of the Name and Sabbaths of the Lord our God, than riding and running up and down with vain Words, Blastings, Threatnings and Oaths, in a Morning, to find out a Preacher, and the Afternoon in Excess and Riot.

I remember that Musculus said, The Papists were unfit Men to correct the Anabaptists; Correctionis non est opus, nisi verorum Christianorum. As he saith, Papists may burn them, but cannot correct them, except Burning be Correction: So these Men may inform, distrain, buy and sell the distrained Goods, and hale Nonconformists to Prison; but is this to convince and reduce them? And tho others may have better Aims and Intentions than these Inferiours have, yet is there not a more excellent Way? especially in such a Time as this, and in such a Matter, wherein so much of the Glory of our Lord Jesus

Jesus is concerned. Let us fear, that to persecute such Men and Differences is intolerable. do not bring upon us that which is really so.

I have used some Means to inform my self, and cannot find that there is one Sign of God's Approbation of such a Course as this is. I have given a small Handfull of Instances in the following Collection, from which much may be observed; and it is but a very little, not so much as a Gleaning would be, if all were written which might be. I have seen it under the Hand of a Reverend Divine, that it was the Conjecture of several Ministers, that if the History of the Sufferings of the Nonconformists were written, but in the West of England, it would make a great Folio. O how much more necessary a Duty lies upon Men, of turning to the Lord from all their wicked Ways, of working out their own Salvation, and furthering the Salvation of one another, of following after Love, Righteousness, and Peace, and Preparation for the black Day of Death, and the great Day of Judgment! and to be more strict against open Sins, than controverted and tolerable Distinctions! But if they who are born after the Flesh, will shew their Natures, and grow manton in Peace and Plenty, and find none to insult upon in their wanton Raptures, but those that desire to know and worship God in Fear; Let all those who are born from above, and are Partakers of the Divine Nature, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, put on Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, forbearing one another: And if any Man have a Quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye: And above all these things, put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness.

And if other Places will not afford Rest and Quietness for peaceable and honest good Men, that differ in a few Things; let not London forget their Labours, who ventured their Lives (with other good Men) to save, and to make Intercessions for them, in the dreadful Plague; nor them who lay in the Dust, pouring out Prayers for them, when Ruines lay instead of stately Piles, who have been eminently serviceable to reclaim dissolute Youth, and promote Piety and Goodness. And why may not good Men, of different Notions and Persuasions in Modes and Forms, live together in Peace and Love, converse with mutual Confidence and Dearness, as well as trade, and maintain Commerce with Persons and Nations of a contrary Religion?

But I must conclude. The Lord prosper what I have in much Sincerity endeavoured for the Glory of God, and his Truth, the Honour of the King, and the Peace and Tranquillity of the Kingdom. Amen.



T H E

Conformist's fourth Plea

F O R T H E

Nonconformists.



UNION is that which all wise, good and gracious Souls must needs desire, and endeavour to attain, as they endeavour the attainment of Happiness, which consisteth in it. Our Divisions are extreme painful and uncomfortable; a great Dishonour and Impediment to Religion, and Communion of Saints. Every Motion and Proposal for it deserves Attention and Thanks, tho it cannot be embraced or assented to. And whatsoever tends to make, continue, and widen our Divisions, should conscientiously be avoided. Rigorous exacting of abateable Articles and Terms, Prejudices, Suspensions, straining of Consequences, aggravating Offences, odious Representations of Persons, Strangeness; refusing to do Offices of Kindness, Justice, and Mercy; dissingenuous Censures, provoking Speeches, and Bitterness, are Wedges of Division: besides other wounding and cutting warlike Instruments, and Proceedings of Ecclesiastical Hostility. As it was from Hardness of Heart, that the Jews put away their Wives for every cause; so it proceeds not from Tenderness of Heart, that our Brethren are put away, as incurable Schismatics, for every Dissent and Disagreement. Peace, Love, and Forbearance have a greater Place assigned them in Religion, than the Things in Controversy, which cause our Division. And whether it be meetest for the greater Things to suffer by the lesser, or the lesser to give place to the greater, let common Reason judg, and common

B

Experience

The Controversy's Fourth Plea

Experience come in as Evidence; especially in a time when we see Religion wounded in Head and Heart, and it can never recover Health, Strength, and Beauty, as long as these Wounds lie open. Unite we must, or continue in this disjointed broken Condition, and grow worse and worse by the application of Force and Warrants. The evil Consequences of this Course are many and great. 1. The Law of Love and Dearness is violated. 2. The Dissenters, in their Judgment, will never want a sufficient Cause, to justify both their Dissent, and their Sufferings; and the better the Cause of their Sufferings appears to be, the more to blame will they be ever thought, by whom they suffer. 3. The ambitious and factious Politician will serve and advance his private Design; by siding with either of the discontented Parties; and the Vices of the Politician shall be laid on the Head of Sacred Religion. 4. Others will sacrifice the Peaceable and Innocent, with their Freedom and Estates, to their own Avarice, and devouring Lusts, under a pretence of executing Laws, and serving the Publick Good and Tranquillity. In few words, Who can reckon the many Impiety's of several sorts, that break in upon the Kingdom of Christ at this great Breach? The greatest and Sum of all is, a Breach in the Communion of Saints, in the Offices of Love. The mischievous Effects of Divisions, are so many Arguments for Union.

And that which doth prejudice sober Minds against the present Course of *Informers*, and armed Men, is, That it tends to the extinction of Love, and to enlarge the Division. And for Union sake, I desire the following Considerations may have the force of Arguments.

But before I come to propose them, I desire it may be noted,

1. It is, and must be acknowledged, that the King is Supreme Governor over all Persons and Causes Ecclesiastical; and it belongs to his Office, to protect and promote the true Christian Religion, and preserve it from what is contrary and destructive to it.

2. As the Offices and Duties of the Supreme Power, seated in the Kings of England, and Bishops and Pastors, have been always distinguished by our most approved Writers; as may be seen in Bishop *Bilson*, of *Subjection*; *Bridges*, of the *Supremacy*; *Andrews*, *Tortura Torti*, &c. Dr. *Nowel* against *Dorman*, (which Dr. *Reynolds* brought to *Hart*, in the beginning of their Conference, who said, That if we gave to Princes no more than Dr. *Nowel* did, he did agree with it); and King *James* himself.

3. When the Magistrate exerciseth his Power by executing of Laws, it is the Duty of the Pastors of the Church to use the Key of Doctrine; that spiritual Means may be applied to the Souls of Men, according to the prescription of our Saviour.

4. Distin-

4. Distinguish between Laws in their Intention, and the Application of them, which hath often fallen into such hands, as turn them away from their Intention, and do not observe them as a Rule to themselves in their Proceedings.

5. No Apology is made, or to be made for any seditious Practice or Doctrines, for violation of Peace, Subjection, and Righteousness, &c.

De vobis quidem dixisse Apostolum legimus, quod non sine causa gladium geratis, & ministri Dei sitis, vindices in eos qui male agunt: sed alia est causa Provinciae, alia est causa Ecclesiae; illius terribiliter gerenda est, administratio hujus clementer: Commendanda est mansuetudo. St. Aug. Epist. 150 ad Apringium.

We may distinguish between *peccata spiritualia & secularia*, between spiritual Sins, and secular. His duplicibus peccatis puniendis, &c. In punishing these two Sins, God hath ordained a twofold Sword or Punishment: a spiritual Sword for spiritual Sins, which is the Word of God; and for secular and outward Sins, a secular Sword, namely Caesar's. *Joan. Brentius, de Jure Magistratus in Anabaptistas.*

Again, we may distinguish between both kinds of Sins, and Evangelical Duties. The Dissenters are not prosecuted for Infidelity, Heresy, &c. or for seditious Crimes, or for secular Crimes and Offences; but for meeting in such Numbers for Religious Exercises and Ordinances; and for this, only because in a manner different from the Church of England, that is, without the Liturgy, as hath been said, and should be kept in mind. And the Prosecution begins by *Informers*, (usually false and wicked Persons, that make a Trade of it) and ends in Fines, Imprisonments, and corporal Sufferings. The manner of doing their Work or Office, is with prophane-ness, Impiety, with what Wrath and Terror they can possibly cast a peaceable unarmed People into. The Informers rush in with Bellowing and Roaring, with Oaths and Impiouness: Sometimes the Souldier comes in with his Pistol cock'd, and threatens he'll pistol any one that stirs, he'll crack the Preacher's Crown, or pistol him.

These Things inserted, to several Uses, and for several Reasons which might be given, I do present you with the Considerations.

I. Can an Evangelical Union of Christians and Churches be ever hoped for by Anti-Evangelical Means and Instruments? Aggravate their Religious Exercises in a manner different from the Liturgy, as proceeding from Minds tainted with no less than Heresy, and to be a direct and formal Schism, and tending to corrupt and not to edify the Souls of Men: What Means and Instruments more proper and effectual to attain a blessed

Unity, and to preserve a Christian Church, than what are appointed by our Lord and Saviour? Certainly he took care to preserve the Purity of Faith, Doctrine, Worship, and Unity of the Faithful; or else he did but according to what he blames, in a Man that begins to build what he cannot finish, sets up a Kingdom in Satan's Kingdom, a Church in the Dominions of the World, which would run into Confusion and Ruine from within it self, except he took a course to preserve it. To call and convert, and not to keep, but to lose, had not been to act answerably to the glorious Name of a Saviour. Since his Manifestation in the exercise of his Mediator Office, he fulfilled all Offices in his own Person, as Prophet, Priest, and King: After his Ascension, he taught and directed his Church by his Spirit, in his Apostles and Ministers; and since their Decease, by his Holy Spirit, and revealed Will and Laws. The Christian Church had all Power within it self, before the Conversion of Emperors, and Civil Potentates; and since they became Nursing-Fathers and Nursing-Mothers, the Church hath lost nothing of her spiritual Power by it; for the Magistrate's Power is not privative, but accumulative. If Penalties, Mulets, Fines, Imprisonments, and forcible Coertion, had been so necessary, it had been necessary to convert and set up Christian Emperors and Kings, armed with a Civil Power, as soon as he had given Success to his Ministers, in calling a Church out of the World: Yet this is not to be wrested to this very Construction, as if the Church could do as well without a Christian Magistrate, as with him. It only pretends to shew us, that our Lord Jesus hath left us Means and Directions, sufficient for the preservation of his Church in Purity and Unity; and that those Prescriptions are most likely to produce his Ends.

Three things are pernicious to the Christian Church: (1.) Corruption of Doctrine and Heresy. (2.) Disunion and Schisms. (3.) Scandal in our Lives and Manners. Our Saviour hath taken care to keep his Church from, or to reform and purge it of all manner of pernicious Acts and Works of Satan and the Flesh: And it lay upon him so to do, more than upon the most Christian Magistrate or Pastor, because he redeem'd his Flock with his own Blood, and took upon him to be the Head of it, and all the Honour he receives from the World, is from his Church in it; and therefore it concerns him so to govern his Church, that he may be honoured in it and by it. To this end the Lord promised to send his Spirit, who is the Spirit of Revelation and Truth, who leads Christ's Disciples into all necessary and saving Truth, and the Spirit of Union with Christ our Head, and with one another, as Fellow-Members. We are instructed in the same Doctrine, governed by the same Laws of Worship and Conversation, and entitled to the same Promises, and Hope of Eternal Life; we are employed in the same Service, engaged in the same Interest, and are made all

all of one Heart, in the main, in the same Aim and Scope. *The Fruits of the Spirit are Love, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, and Meekness.* Gal. 5. 22, 23. *The Kingdom of God is Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy-Ghost.* Rom. 14. 17. The Wisdom of all who are of this Kingdom, is Wisdom from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of Mercy, and good Fruits. Jam. 3. 17. To call for Fire from Heaven, was from another Spirit. *Christianorum spiritus element est, comburitur tantum igne charitatis.* Urbanus Regius, *loc. Theolog. Cap. de Hereticis.* He hath shewed a more excellent way to Pastors and People, and their Civil Governors. Besides the personal Qualifications of a Bishop, which accomplish him for his Work, the Scripture is full of Directions for his Behaviour in the House of God, at all Times, and when those Evils do compass and invade it, which do endanger it: *The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, instructing them that oppose themselves.* 2 Tim. 2. 24. When perilous Times come, be must continue in the Things which he hath learned, and been assured of. chap. 3. v. 14. When Men arise to subvert the Hearers, and whose Words will eat as with a Canker or Gangreen; then, *Charge them before the Lord, that they strive not about Words to no Profit. Study to shew thy self approved of God, a Workman. Fly youthful Lusts; follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace with them that call on the Name of the Lord out of a pure Heart.* 2 Tim. 2. 14, 15, 22, 23, 24. When the Time comes, that People will not endure sound Doctrine, &c. but turn away from the Truth; then, *Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.* 2 Tim. 4. 2, 3. What shall they do, if grievous Wolves enter in among the Flock? and Men arise, speaking perverse Things, to draw away Disciples after them; then, *Take heed to your selves, and to the Flock, &c.* Acts 20. 29, 30. What, when unruly and vain Persons and Deceivers, who subvert whole Houses, teaching Things which they ought not, for filthy Lucre sake? In this Case he is directed, besides the Graces of his Conversation, he must hold fast the faithful Word, that he may be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and confute the Gain-sayers: *Rebuke them sharply.* Tit. 1. 9, 13. What must be done, if Ordinances be profaned or corrupted? They must be restored to their first Institution and Purity. 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21, &c. If Gifts be exercised unprofitably? *Let all Things be done to edifying.* 1 Cor. 14. 26. If Ordinances and Administrations be disorderly, and by unfit Persons? *For it is a shame for Women to speak in the Church,* v. 35. *Let all Things be done decently, and in Order,* v. 40. What if Christians run into Schisms? Reprove and reduce them, as the Apostle doth, 1 Cor. chap. 1, & 3. And if Brethren fall into scandalous Sins, which leaven the Lump, the Apostle's Order to the Corinthians was,

The Conformist's Fourth Plea

was, to put them away, not in company with them, no, not so as. And the Covetous, Idolater, Recluse, Drunkard, Extortioner, are ranked with the Fornicator, 1 Cor. 5. 11. Excommunication is the greatest and last Censure and Judgment of the Church; and when it is past, the excommunicate Person must be look'd after. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8.

Minoribus (Episcopis) inter quos fuit dñs Augustinus, non placuit imploratis profane potestate negotium Ecclesiasticum, existimantibus non decere Episcopis alibi armis nisi quoniam verbo Dei & precibus. & si malum foret insanabile, Anathemate, b. e. separatione à Communione: Hoc tum erat extremum Ecclesie supplicium. Et sicut apud Jurisconsultos, civilis mors dicitur exilium; ita apud Apostolos, & horum Successores, pena capitis erat ab Ecclesie consortio submovisse. Socii Eustasius in Respons. de Inquisitione.

There are weak Persons in the Church, and the Apostle gives us his own Example for our Behaviour, 1 Cor. 9. 22. *To the Weak, I became as weak, that I might gain the Weak.* In a word, the Weapons of our Warfare are assimilated or fitted to the Warfare; they are spiritual. 2 Cor. 10. 45. The holy Apostle saw, or foresaw, the worst of Men and Times, and hath by the Spirit of God directed what's fit and best to be done by the Pastors of the Churches. And the Flock are not wholly left to the Guidance of their Pastors, but they are taught how to act and carry themselves. They must know all Things; 1 Thess. 5. 21. *Try the Spirits,* 1 Joh. 4. 1. *Contend for the Faith,* Jude 3. *Stand fast,* 1 Cor. 16. 13. *Beware of false Prophets,* Mat. 7. 15. *Mark and avoid them that cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine,* Rom. 16. 17. Phil. 3. 2. &c. And against Corruptions of Manners, they are advised, Col. 3. 9. 1 Cor. 5. to 2. 8. 1 Cor. 11. 20, &c. Ephes. 5. 4.

Lastly; Touching the Magistrate's Power, there is one Law for him: What the Heathen Magistrates were not, but should be, that the Christian Magistrate must be, Rom. 13. 3, 4. *the Minister of God for Good, a Terror, not to the Good, but to the Evil.*

Estote contenti gladio quem vobis tradidit Deus; punite latrones, punite proditores, falsos testes, & ejus generis ceteros. Quod ad Religionem attinet, defendite pios adversus aliorum injurias. Georg. Klembergius.

Upon the whole, we see what care the Lord hath taken of his Church, and what Means are to be used for the Preservation of Purity in Doctrine and Life, and of Unity among Christians. And 'tis not to be doubted but if all in their places, did walk according to the Commands of our Saviour, our Divisions would be near to a Cure, or more tolerable than now they are: and what Spirit or Power so likely to heal and prevent our feared Destruction, as a Catholick Christian Spirit, which is holy, gracious, fervent, charitable, laborious, patient, reconciling, and wise. After that St. Augustine chan-
ged

ged his Judgment, from sparing, to be for fining and coercing the *Dominants* and *Circumcellions*, he did not leave the Work in the Hands of the Presidents and their Officers, but did use all spiritual Means to rectify and recover them: *Si enim terrentur & non docerentur, improba quasi Dominatio videretur.* Aug. Vincentib, Ep. 48. and he was so far from exasperating and exciting the Magistrates, that he often wrote by way of Intercession. A greedy wicked Informer, and his Disciples, should never discharge us from all Evangelical Ways of healing our Breaches. And tho they are Instruments to call for Execution of a Temporal Law, we must not think our selves excused, till we have done all that is in us to procure Unity and Peace. And let it be but thought upon;

1. If Discipline were executed, Whether those impious Agents are not the meetest Objects of it?

2. Make the Case of the Dissenting Protestants as bad as can be, suppose them Hereticks and Schismatics; yet let us search the Scripture, and see if Adulterers and Fornicators, and other wicked Doers, are not under a worse Note than they. We are to avoid Hereticks, and the Concision; that make Divisions, contrary to the Doctrine of our Saviour and his Apostles, of necessary and ceremonial, and indifferent things. We are to labour to set Dividers in joint; but where we do find the weak, and doubting Brother, yea more, they who cried, *I am of Paul, and I of Cephas*, to be as a Heathen or Publican, or to be put away, or with such an one, no not to eat? The Offences of weak Christians, or such as are taken at different Forms, or indifferent Things, are none of those Offences that bring Wo to the World.

3. Not some Godliness in one Form, but all Godliness, in all Forms within general Rules and Honesty, deserve Protection and Praise.

4. They impute greatest Fault to the Laws, that give them this Construction, That the Dissenters suffer for violating a Temporal Law, which makes any Exercise of Religion to such a number above four to be *sedition*: which is as much as to say, the Law makes that to be a Sin, a Sin of Sedition, which is no Sin, but in it self good and religious, and of great use and benefit.

5. Certainly it is a less Error, to err in a Form of Worship, than in the Substance of true Faith and Worship. But suppose our Brethren were Apostates from the Faith, it were greater Mercy to force them to the Faith than to a Form of Worship: but Compulsion with Penalties is nowhere prescribed in the Laws of Christ, not even to the Faith, without which there's no Salvation. *Christo noue Legis auctori omnino hoc placuisse, ut ad Legem suam recipiendam nemo huius vitæ pœnis aut earum metu pertraheretur.* Grotius de jure Belli & Pacis, l. 2. c. xx, §. 48. which he confirms

by

by several Testimonies of the Ancients, and he interpreteth that in the Gospel, *Compel them to come in*, to signify *instantiam Vocatoris*, the importunity of the Caller.

II. It is unnatural, contrary to natural Light and Law, to punish Men for Religion, and not for Evil-doing. Christians that believe and profess the whole Christian Faith, that worship God according to the general Rules of the Gospel, and follow Righteousness and Peace, are put out of their places, when thrust into the rank of Evil-doers. When the Apostle saith to the Christian under a Heathen Magistrate, *Do that which is good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same*. Rom. 13.3. he speaks of well-doing in the Judgment of Nature, and according to its Light, that well-doing is to be rewarded with Praise, and only evil-doing to be avenged; and that such evil-doing as was contrary to the Law of Nature. He is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil; that doth Evil in the sight of God, forbidding the Evil in some of his Laws. Do our Brethren worship a false God, or the true by Images? Do they set up another Gospel? then let them be accused. Do they disseminate Seditions, or act against Peace and Righteousness between Man and Man? let them suffer as other Men do. And if the Prisons cannot hold them, build more for them. But they are not accused of such Offences; they are driven from their Worship in their Meetings, to bring them to other Assemblies; from one Form to another; but yet the Crime is for Religious Exercise, and the worst that can be feared, is some Changes in Religion, or State. I cannot tell how far *Grotius* will be allowed to speak, because he was a great Party in a Faction himself, neither do I use his Name but for his Reason: 'They who punish Teachers and Professors of the Christian Religion, *Haud dubie faciunt contra ipsam Rationem*—'. Neither 'are their Pretences to be admitted, who say new Changes are to be feared, especially Assemblies—'. But new Opinions are not to be feared, which 'lead only to all things that are honest, and Obedience to Superiours, *Nec suspecti debent cæcus proborum Hominum*, neither ought the Assemblies of honest Men be feared; *Et qui latere non querunt ni-*

De Jur. Bell. lib. 2. 'si cogantur; and that do not desire to be private
c. xx. §. 49. 'or secret, unless they be forced or constrained.
'And in the 30 §. of the same Chapter, he saith,
'they do very wickedly who punish them, who believe the Law of Christ
'to be true, but doubt or err in some Points, *que extra Legem sunt*, that
'are not written in the Law (of Christ) or that are ambiguous, or not
'expounded by the Ancients in the same Sense. The Jews who had the
'Law for them, did never impose Punishments upon the Sadduces, who err'd

in the great Point of the Resurrection. To prove that to punish Religion is preternatural, let it be considered.

1. As Nature dictates, and consents that God is to be worshipped; and Religion is honoured, where God is honoured and owned: so Nature tells us, that Men must worship God according to the light and freedom of their Minds and Wills. Upon this Principle *Athanagoras* pleaded the Christian Cause with the Emperors, that they permitted several Nations and People to worship their several Gods, lest

Legat. pro Christianis prope initium.

Tertul. Apol. c. 24.

Impiety should abound by suppressing the Deity, and for this Reason, because it was necessary, that every Man should worship that God which he had chosen. It was from the loss of Light and Truth, that more Gods than one were worshipped; but it was from right Reason, that every Man should worship according to his own Mind and Choice. The Mercy of God is great in making himself known to us by Revelation, that he might rectify our Minds, and propound himself to us, as infinitely worthy our Choice and Service. Christian Religion contradicts no Dictate of Nature; it is the most that is asked, that our Brethren may be allowed to worship the true God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ with the freedom of their Consciences, differing from us only in a few external Modes. *Tertullian* goes

Ad Scapulum. c. 2.

upon the same Principle, *tamen humani juris & naturalis Potestatis est unicuique, quod putatur colere, neque alii obest, aut prodest alterius Religio* — There can be no sincere, nor consequently no acceptable Service without a choice and freedom of Mind;

and indeed we should be studious to inquire into the form and manner of Worship, next unto the

Nemo ab invito collet. Idem Apol. c. 24.

Knowledg of him who is to be served, that he may be pleased with his Worship. The Soul of the Worshipper finds no Profit by, nor takes Pleasure nor Comfort in what he scruples, nor doth God take Pleasure in that Service which is not done in Faith and Sincerity. *Inutilis enim Deo est, qui Devotione, ac Fide caret, nihil enim est tam voluntarium, quam Religio; in qua si animus sacrificantis aversus est, iam sublata, iam nulla est.* *Lactant. de Iustitia. l. 5. c. 19.*

2. It is contrary to good Nature to render Evil for Good, and not Good for Good. Publicans and Sinners will love and do good to those that do good to them: Religion teaches all its Professors to do Good to all and is attended with the greatest Blessings to Mankind. The design of the Christian Religion is to make Men blessed; and where it works and obtains, it turns the Heart to God, and all manner of Good, and engageth all that receive it to do good to all. It pronounceth a Blessing

C

only

only upon the holy and righteous; the Preachers of it teach no other way to Blessedness but by Purity of Heart, Mercy, Righteousness, Peacemaking; it sets before us for our imitation our Heavenly Father, and our Holy Saviour, and holy Men; it enjoyns us to mind whatever things are just, true, pure, honest, lovely, and of good Report.

Preachers of the Gospel that endeavour to restore Spiritual Light and Life, and to convert lost Souls from the Error of their Ways, deserve better Preferments than Forfeitures and Penalties, and greater Immunities than from Prisons and Confinements. And Christians should know, that a Willingness to save them, and Fervency in praying for them, and living so as to promote the Welfare of a Nation, is doing the greatest Good to them, and deserves a suitable return.

3. Such is the goodness of Religion, that as soon as Men became acquainted with it, they ceased to persecute it, and did embrace it. He that hath the vivive faculty, doth receive the Light; he that hath a spark of right Reason, and Inclination to good, finds his Soul kindled with a desire to it, and resolution to have and retain it. The Ignorance of the Christian Religion among the *Romans*, was the cause of their Persecution of it, and they did ill to condemn what they knew not. But all who before time hated it, because they knew not what kind of thing it was which they had hated, *simul ut desinunt ignorare, cessant & odire*, as soon as they cease to be ignorant of it, they cease to hate it. *Tertull. Apol. c. 1.* They who are most, and best acquainted with Religion, its Power and Nature, the Imperfection of Light, Power and Tenderness of Conscience; that read the Works, and are acquainted with the Persons of our Brethren, are most compassionate and moderate, altho there are others which will not know, because they have hated them.

4. It is contrary to Reason and good Nature, to afflict and punish the Religious, because they who were the worst of Men, in whom Corruption of Nature bore greatest Rule, and in whom Honesty and goodness of Nature and Conscience was dethroned, have been its greatest Enemies, even from *Herod and Nero*, to *Severus, Charles the ixth, and Philip of Spain*; and from the High-Priests to *Gardiner and Bonner*: Or, if those Princes were virtuous and merciful in their own Natures, those that did provoke, and abuse their Power, were more degenerate Monsters than Men. Men of good Nature, will be pitiful even to them that err, or do ill through Error. If I knew that a Man did but pray for me, I would believe he loved me; and if I believed he loved me, I would not afflict that Man, but love him, and do him good; much less would I contend and molest him for the want of a Formality. The Scourges of the Ancient Christians, are painted out by *Lactantius* as more inhumane than the most cruel Thieves, most

most angry Enemies, most fierce Barbarians, l. 5. *de Justitia*, c. 19. and that contaminated and wretched Spirits, who know and hate the Truth, do insinuate themselves into the Minds, and stir up ignorant Men to Fury, c. 21.

5. On the contrary; the more humane any Men have been, the more easily inclined to Justice and Clemency to Christians, tho of a different, and an unalloyed Religion. Where natural Light and Conscience is in any considerable Authority, there it goes best with the peaceable and inoffensive of a different way; it being contrary to the judgment and sense of humane Nature to deal ill with them, that do no ill. Famous is the Example of *Pliny* and *Trajan* to this purpose: *Pliny* in his Letter to *Trajan* the Emperor for his Direction how to deal with Christians, gave him this just and true account of them, that he found nothing in them, but obstinate refusing to sacrifice, &c. forbidding Man-slaughter, Adultery, Fraud, Treachery, and other Wickednesses. To which *Trajan*, from a good rectified Nature, sent Answer, and gave this Order: *Hoc genus inquirendos non esse*, i. e. You must connive at such: Let not Informers, or Accusers inquire, or search for them. Upon which

merciful Decree or Edict, the learned *Vossius* observes, in this *Trajan* the Emperor had better thoughts of Christians, than those Christians have

Comment. de Christianorum Persecutione, p. 82.

who have thought, that not Mahometans only, but Christians suspected of Heresie, should be brought into the *Inquisition*; *Mitior in Christianos Trajanus, quam ejusmodi Christiani*. And truly, as Heresy is some degrees beyond Nonconformity, a Worm more pernicious to Christianity, than it; so Christianity was more contrary to the Emperor's Religion, than Nonconformity to ours. From the same Justice and Clemency, and Law of Nature, *Adrian* the Emperor gave order to *Gratianus* the President of *Asia* (to whom it seemed unjust to destroy the Christians for no Crime, and being unheard, to satisfy the Clamors of the People) That they should be punished, if they committed any thing against the Laws: which as the same great Man *G.V.* expounds, is meant,

not if they did any thing against the Laws of the twelve Tables, which forbid the bringing in of any new Gods; *Ibid. p. 89.*

but, *non esse animadvertendum in Christianos, nisi sint facinorosi*; the Christians might not be punished, except they were great Offenders, or guilty of Sedition. And for a Conclusion of this Head, take the Observation of *Grotius*, that God did not punish all that were convict of Idolatry (what more contrary and dishonourable to God than that?) nor appointed the *Canaanites* to Destruction, till they had added other great Sins and Iniquities to that; *Gen. 15. 16. vid. de Jure Belli, l. 2. c. xx. §. 47.*

6. It is contrary to the sense of the sober and temperate sort of Mankind, yea it's contrary to that little that is left of Conscience, Judgment and Modesty in the more corrupt, and declared Enemies of Religion and Vertue, to inflict Sufferings upon the Religious, for Religion sake, or for Exercises of Piety and Religion. This may be demonstrated by three Observations.

1. That it hath been the business of the most vile and wicked of Men to persecute Religion; it was too cruel and base a Work for any other.

2. The Persecutors of Religion have been constrained by a Fiction of Calumny, to oppress the Religious, as impious, and the holy Servants of Christ, as prophane, and seditious, dangerous Persons; or else they could not draw out their Anger and Enmity against them, nor exercise it with any Authority and Approbation: this is true from our Saviour's Sufferings, as an Enemy to *Cesar*, and a Destroyer of the Temple, throughout the days of the Apostles, and all Ages to this very time. Jews, Heathens, and Papists have feigned, and imagined Causes of the unjust Sufferings of the Saints of God. The History of the New-Testament shews this; the Writings of the Fathers in their Apologies shew it, who clear the Christians from the shameless Slanders of Incell, eating Infants, and Atheism, and the foulest of Sins. And the bloody Papists have invented Covers for their Cruelties: First, they brand us for Hereticks, and then they burn us; and to put a Grace upon this foul Work, who are fittest to make and blow the Fire, and mark out the Branches in Christ for it, than the Friars, the Religious Orders, who profess a Perfection of Religion. And as if the Laws of Princes were too soft and gentle, these *Clementia Magistris*, Masters or Teachers of Clemency, (as *Erasmus* calls them) are fiery to a third degree, above the hottest of them. I wish I could stop here, but I cannot, except wilfully heedless, but observe, how some in this Age do temper their Spirits in the very Fire, whet their Tongues, and draw Protestants, holy Men, and peaceable, in a colour deeper than they do Pope or Cardinals.

3. This will appear by the Relentings, Relaxation of the Severities, Excuses, and throwing off the guilt of Persecutions from themselves upon others, and pretending Fears of some great Mutations of State, and some other ways and arts of Persecutors: it is a Work which few or none are willing to own. *Dominian*, a very Limb of *Nero*, *Portio Neronis*, began a Persecution, but as much as was in him of a Man, did repress that beginning, recalling them that were banished. But of all the Princes that came after, even to this very day, that favored any thing of God, or Humanity, shew us any of them that was an Oppressor of the Christians; but on the contrary,

trary, we will produce a Protector. If the Letters of *Marcus Aurelius*, the most grave Emperor, be searched, wherein he testifies, that by the Prayers of the Christian Souldiers, Rain was sent to quench the Thirst of his Army going against the *Germans*: as he openly took off the Punishment from such kind of Men, so he dispers it openly another way, condemning their Accusers in worse Condemnation. Saith *Tertullian*, *Apolog.* c. 5. ' We can ' (saith he to *Scapula*, c. 3.) set before thee the latter ends of some Prelates that in the end of their Life have remembered that they sinned by ' vexing the Christians. *Cinc. Severus* (one of the Cruel Presidents) himself taught the Christians how they might answer that they might be discharged, c. 4. Nearer our own Times, we find that *Charles* the Ninth disowned the treacherous, barbarous Murder of the Admiral, and the bloody Massacre, and throws it upon the Duke of *Guise*, in one of his Letters; and in others wrote, that it was to prevent a Conspiracy of the Admiral and the *Huguenots*. And in the bloody Days of Queen *Mary*, it appears the Persecution was contrary to the sense and temper of the Nation; and who of the chief would avow it? The Queen declared, she would force no Man in those points of Religion: *Gardiner* and other Bishops, and Privy-Counsellours openly in Court purged themselves of it, and laid it on the Queen; so now it could fall no where but on the King — *Philip* seeing all cast upon him, and understanding it would make him unacceptable to the Nation, he was concerned to clear himself of the Imputation; therefore *Alphonfus* a *Franciscan*, his Confessor, in a Sermon before him preached largely against the taking away of People's Lives for Religion, and in plain terms inveighed against the Bishops for doing it. And to conclude, even now, if this were the Vote of the Nation of Conforming Protestants, What's the reason that so few directly and professedly engage in it, that are Men of Wisdom, Interest, and Estates? What's the reason that so few of the poor and indigent irreligious do not turn Informers, as long as there is Money to be got by it, as they hope? It is a sign of a general Disallowance and the Dissent of common Reason and Conscience. And if ever a search should be made into them that turn the Wheel upon Dissenters, few or none would stand to it, and say, it is I. It is no other than a spurious Act, which none will own as a voluntary deliberate Act; it hath a Father, but who will father it? *Nolunt enim summe offe, quia malum agnoscunt.*

Printed after the Commentaries of Ch. the ix, by P. Ramus.

Dr. Burnet of the Reformation, B. 2. p. 305.

Consider,

Confid. III. It is not Loyal, to make a peaceable Government burthenfom to scrupulous, religious, but peaceable, honest, useful Members of Cities, Towns, and Countreys; and to represent Religious Meetings, (suppose them defective in Form) as Cabals of Conspirators: This is to make a State-Schism, and to keep the Government in fear, and upon the watch against our Friends.

Confid. IV. It is Schismatical *effectum*, if not *affectum*; for I demand, Are they Christians? Try their Faith, call them to give a Reason of the Hope that is in them. If they were justly excommunicated, by what divine Rule do they suffer in their Bodies, Goods, and Liberties? Great Care and Tendernefs

2 Cor. 2. *versf.*

4. *ad* 12.

should be used to recover and restore them. But to proceed against Christians, for want of a mutable Form, and indifferent Things, to Poverty and Bonds, and to take no care of them, is it not as much as really to say to Members of the Body, *I have no need of you?* Is this to take care of them? Do they that prosecute, weep with them, and mourn with them? Are they kindly affectioned towards them? Do they love them as Brethren? Have they compassion on them in their Troubles and Bonds? &c. It is not enough for us to say, they are Schismatics; can that excuse our Schismatical Disaffections, Revilings, Accusations, and Scorns? I am sure the Apostle makes these Notes of a Schismatick, by Inference, as the other of Union to prevent a Schism, 1 Cor. 12. It is a fine Observation of the memorable Mr. Jo. Hales: 'The Learned of our Times, who, for our Instruction, have written *de Notis Ecclesie* — may seem to have ill forgotten this, which the Heathen Man had so clearly discovered, he meant *Ammianus Marcellinus*, taxing *Georgius*, a factious Bishop of *Alexandria*, for abusing the Weakness of *Constantine* the Emperor, by base Tale-bearing, and privy Informations, notes precisely that he did it, *Oblivis professionis sue, que nil nisi justum suadet & lenes*; quite beside his Profession, whose especial Notes were *Gentleness* and *Equity*. The Christians were called *Chrestiani*, from a Word signifying *Benignity* and *Sweetness*. What reason is there, why that should not be one of the chiefest Notes of the Church of Christ, which did so especially characterize a Christian Man, except there were a decay of it at this day in the Church? [*Serm. of Dealing with erring Christians*, pag. 26. of the 2d Impression.]

Confid.

Confid. V. It doth reflect a Scandal upon the Church; for now, except it be by writing of some Books, whose Leaves are not like the Leaves of the Tree of Life, for healing of the Nation, what little Pains are taken, to instruct, convince, or persuade them, neither with soft Words, nor hard Arguments? Either are better than neither of them. But now the Officer called *Informers*, is the first Mover and Instrument in the Reformation; an Employment that is, which many that are too bad cannot be hired unto: A sort of Men these are, that are more perfect than the *Prosecutors* in *Tertullian's* Time: *Tales semper nobis Insecutores injusti, impii turpes, quos & ipsi damnare consuevis, & à quibus damnatos restituere soliti estis.* The English the Character, lest some other make it worse than it is: It is no more but this; They are unjust, ungodly, filthy, such as ye are wont to condemn, (and our Judges have often condemned) and to restore such as are condemned by them. I should not dare to write this, but that I would move our professed Friends to take another Course, more for the Honour of the Church, and our Holy Profession, than this. The Church that now is can no more turn the Stream, or change the Course of the Law, than other Men can, and are not able to help them, (as the Reverend Bishop of *Cork* speaks, *pag. 121.*) But is it not fit our Governors should know how it reflects upon them?

1. The World is possess'd with a Conceit, that this Work of undoing Men is pleasing to some that do not only look on, but set Men on; not displeasing to others, tho some say they are sorry for it; as the same foresaid sensible and moving Bishop of *Cork*.

2. That such poor and insufficient Ministers are placed in many Churches, which rather drive Men away, than give them tolerable Encouragement to attend their Ministry, or Hopes of Improvement. Methinks the Thing it self should be more offensive than the Mention of it, when there is such notorious Truth in it. The Bishops cannot hinder their Institution, but some are sensible of the great easiness of some in their Admission into Orders. If awakened Souls keep at home, there is danger that sleepy Preaching may cast them into a Lethargy; if they go abroad, they are in danger of the Laws.

3. When other Means are not used, or do not overcome Dissenters, to set their Creatures upon them, doth alienate the Minds of Multitudes: We are not (say they) provided for, nor must we provide for our selves; Good Conforming Preachers dare not encourage us to go to them; and if we are received with better Welcome there, they are suspected to be as bad or worse than the Nonconformists.

And

And that they should be hunted and worried, and the Fleeces torn from their Backs, by such a sort of Animals, of ignorant, infidel, voracious Enemies to all Religion, is a very great Affliction to the Sufferers, and Reproach upon our Religion; as if spiritual Means were not used, or spiritual Weapons had no Power; as if Christians were to be tamed by irrational Methods; as if the Shepherd's Voice, nor his Rod and Staff could do no Good, but the scattered Sheep were given up to the Dogs, to bring them to the Fold, that prey for themselves: As if a self-created Officer, that's below a Commission, and unworthy of a Livery, had greater Virtue in him to cure Church-Divisions, than Ordained Ministers. I assure the Reader, this is written not to make him merry; And I do not know whether it will be pardoned to me, to conclude this Head with this, That 'tis no wonder the Success is no better, when no more sanctified Means and Instruments are employed to act in a Work of this Nature and Consequence.

Confid. VI. By this way the holy Ordinances of God; many choice Men for excellent Pastoral Gifts, Qualifications and Parts, and real Holiness, are brought to contempt, to great contempt; and this way is a very great Obstruction to the Encrease of Saving-Knowledge and true Religion in many. The malignant Influences of our Divisions upon Religion, is demonstrated by the affectionate Bishop of Cork, in his second Sermon.

** Usque ad etatem Augustini, hoc est plus quam quadringentis post Christum natum annis, nusquam legimus Orthodoxos implorasse Cæsaris presidium adversus Hereticos: quum id frequentissime factum esset ab Hereticis: Nunquam tamen hoc exemplum imitari visum est Orthodoxis, donec Donatistarum & Circumcellionum percelleret perveracem & insanabilem insaniam &c.*

Erasmus in Respons. de Inquisitione.

I shall limit my Observation to the same Design of Peace and Unity, and keep to the Thing in hand; That this proceeding against the Nonconformists, is of ill consequence to Religion in general. * If they were an Heretical Sect, except turbulent to the State, where have we a Rule for such a Process against them? But without disparagement, or making any offensive Comparisons between their Ministers, and their Hearers, and ours, there is no Man that can take the measure of Abilities proportioned to the Work of Christ, but must acknowledge them to come as near to the Standard, as most Men in the Age: And for their Auditors, generally they are Men of as much Aptness, Receptivity, of Apprehension, Judgment, and Experience in the Work and Way of Salvation, as any Men of their several Ranks and Qualities, in the Places where they live, and are as great Examples of Truth, Sobriety, practical Holiness;

Holiness: and are as much exercised in reading, praying, conferring, re-
deeming Time, walking not as Fools, but as wise, as any Men that pro-
fess Christ among us, and every way as useful Subjects. There are se-
veral Degrees of them; some have their Indiscretions, and their Mistakes,
and their Heats, and their Blemishes; and what Party have not? But if
the Grace of God hath appeared to any Men, and if any are taught to *deny*
Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in
this present World, as I am sure there are, there are such among them. And
it is no disparagement to them, that they are scrupulous, considering re-
maining Ignorance: for if Men have a due sense of Sin, and have known
what it is to be humbled and penitent, they must needs be fearful and ten-
der; and then what with want of Helps, Studies, and Leisure to study
Things less necessary, many of them may not be so judicious, as to dis-
solve the Knot of Scruples; and judging of Things according to their
Use and Benefit to them, they may not be so taken with what others
practise. But there are among them plain Men, of as clear Perceptions
as any I ever met with, of their Education. But now both their Teachers
and themselves are under the scorn and contempt of *Fanaticks*, which sig-
nifies with many, what Unacquaintance, Pride, and Uncharitableness can
cast upon them.

1. It is injurious to Religion, as if they that preach, pray, search the
Scriptures, prove giddy, unsettled, odd, and erroneous; an irrational
Sect of Men, sprung up among Men of no solidity or settlement. Hence
what an Advantage doth the malignant Spirit take, to make so many ig-
norant and carnal Fanaticks? meer Babes in Religion, that have nothing
in them but what is put into their Mouths, or infecteth them with undi-
cerned and senseless Popery, in this Point, That the Peoples having and
reading of the Scriptures, is dangerous, as disposing to Heresy and Di-
visions.

2. It renders the Labours of the worthiest of them suspected and de-
spised, and this is an hindrance to our Union: for who values those Men that
are not fit to preach? or whose Labours teach People to run into Fancies
and Delusions? The most useful, profitable, searching Books, which
the World hath most need of, are not as much as looked into by many,
but rejected, because they are the Books of *Fanaticks*, as they are called.
Yea, more, if a Conformist have the Name of a *Fanatick*, some of our
Church-Parrots will not come nigh the Door-Posts of Wisdom.

3. It is a Temptation, and I fear a prevailing one, that there is no
Worship either necessary or acceptable unto God, or safe for the Soul, but
the Legal in all its parts and accidents. Hence it is manifest, that all the
Religion of many, stays at Church, no Sign or Mark of it brought
home

home to their Houses, and private Conversation. Is it not manifest, that many are so prejudiced against them, as dangerous Persons, because they suffer, that they running into an extreme of Opposition, continue in a clear way of Irreligion and Damnation; so far from praying, and any thing that looks like Godly, that they live in the Confession of all Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and live intemperately, unrighteously, and ungodly, in swearing, self-damning, and blaspheming.

5. Others seeing that Men, that seem to take the greatest care of their eternal Interest, are thus branded, pursued, and troubled, lie fast asleep in carnal Security, or take up in outward Formality. If God awaken them, they lie down again; and they are easily persuaded to lie down, who are not thoroughly resolved, when they observe this Way is every where spoken against. If a Man become truly penitent, of loose become strict, of careless become circumspect, of lukewarm become zealous, he is strait a Fanatick, or that way inclined: And who knows not the Power of such Suggestions and Temptations? Which prevails so far upon abundance of Men, so openly and shamefully, to be ashamed of the Ways of Christ, and of speaking of his Commandments, except it be in Cavil or Contention, contrary to the holy Psalmist, *I will speak of thy Testimonies before Kings, and will not be ashamed.* Psal. 119. 46.

6. It makes the Wicked rejoice, when they see them who condemn them, as *Noah* did the Old World, by being moved with fear, and preparing an Ark, to see them persecuted; and makes vile prophane Sinners run into an Excess of Insolence, when they have them at their mercy, or in their hands.

7. It is a Temptation to many, to do many things in an hypocritical compliance with ungodly Men, which in their Hearts they cannot allow, because at other Times and Places they express a dislike of them, for fear of staining themselves with the disgrace of being Favourers of Dissenters: I mean this in one particular of Excess of Drinking, those plausible Arts and Introductions to it; and of joining in Discourses, or not silencing them, which favor rankly loathsome of Prophaneness and Atheism.

8. It disableth good Men from doing those Works of Piety and Charity, which otherwise they would do. It is not unobserved, how bountiful the sober Dissenters are in all Collections, upon publick and unsuspected Occasions, besides many other Charges they are at, of contributing something to their Teachers, relieving particular Persons in great Wants, living hospitably. They are much weakened by Fines, Indictments, &c. and are great Losers by the Seizure of Goods above value, and underselling them, that they cannot do the Good they would: And who are enriched by

by it, but they who will never be rich, nor blest'd, till they repent and restore? It is no pleasing Consideration to any Man of any Indifferency, to see honest Mens Goods carried away, to maintain some in open Impiety.

9. It is a great Temptation to as many as love this World, to follow Christ no more openly than *Nicodemus*; for they are for a Religion that is safe and saving, if not gainful. Yea, it is a dangerous thing for a Man, a private Man, a Man and his own House, to sing Psalms, read, pray, catechise, when an Informer, hearing but a Voice, goes and informs of a Conventicle, and his Oath must be taken for the King, when really 'tis for himself, and his Master. There is sufficient Proof and Testimony of such Things as these, *See the Narrative that some have been highly damned for praying out of Devon. 1671.* in their own Families.

10. It is a great Temptation to the Children of Godly Parents, to walk in Ways contrary to God and their Parents, and to beget grudgings against their Parents, when they are like to be Sufferers by their Parents Practices.

11. It is a great Temptation to Apostacy, I do not mean from a Faction or Party, but from the undoubted Offices and Duties of true Godliness. How many have, within these few Years past, fallen from the strictness of keeping the Lord's Day, of preaching twice, of hearing carefully, of taking Notes, repeating Sermons, and Family-Duties? Yea, that have turned to a contrary way of Debauchery and Impiety, as wanting strength of Grace and Courage, to own their Baptismal Vow, the Practice of the truly Pious, and their Saviour's Laws?

12. By this the Communion of Saints is much broken, and the Comfort of it lost. This Mischief is grown now to that degree, that it is criminal to hear any of them preach, or join with them in Duties in the same Family, be the Occasion never so great and excusable. Are they Christians? and shall not one Christian converse with another Christian, as a Christian, in Christian Offices? If they come to us, it is almost as bad as our going to them. And this Nonconformity deprives us in a great part of the practical Article of our Creed; for the Communion of Saints doth consist in Practice and Exercise. And had we not better spare the Things we contend for, than an Article of Faith? Or why may not a Conformist hold occasional Communion with the Nonconformists, in indisputable Duties, retaining the Liberty and Reputation of his Conformity, without suspicion? Is it because we must not offend Authority? Then certainly a greater Weight is hugg upon Conformity, than it can bear, if ever it be weighed in an even Balance. We are forward to blame the

more rigid sort of Separatists, for not coming to our Worship; and why are we so rigid as to forbear all Christian Communion with them, as if Christianity were all lost among them? O that we were as averse from other Company, as we are from them, in holy Duties! I do declare, for this very reason taken from my Creed, that I do hold mental Communion with all the holy Brethren, Partakers of the heavenly Calling, and am prepared for local and external Communion with them in all Christian Duties and Ordinances.

Confid. VII. To silence, molest and punish sound and able Ministers, and Protestant Christians, is as much as to render them altogether unserviceable to the Church and Kingdom in a time of need, and in places that need all their Labours, and to cut them off, except they be moved by force of Law to come in, and do as we do. But the Church of God in England and Wales hath great need of more such Men as they are; and some places had sat in Darknes had it not been for them. This is true, and therefore this course of proceeding with them, is detrimental to Religion it self, and to the Salvation of precious Souls. Surely, either we do not know what it is to save Souls, or we must be sensible, that it is a Work of great Study, Industry and Watchfulness; and how a small Parish is too great and numerous, without great Diligence for most of us; and how long it is, before we come to a holy dexterity in the management of our Calling. Who is sufficient so to preach, as to be a saviour of Life? But who is sufficient for publick and private Work? Some make no more of it, but to fend a Man, and a wooden Staff: but the Prophet himself must stretch himself, and breath upon the dead Child, &c. It is matter of Praise to read diligently the Prayers, and preach constantly, but we know, that many must be fetched in, not by citing them first to Court, that way is much about, so far about that some are lost that way and never come in; we must go and fetch them in by our personal Applications, and Addresses to their Consciences. It is better have too many than too few, saith the Reverend Bishop of Cork. We have too few, if they were all admitted and encouraged. And what an unreasonable loss is it to be deprived of their Labours, who are devoted to the Work, and have as edifying a Gift of popular persuasive Argumentation as any Men? Who have been our Teachers and Examples in this kind more than they? What an Example was the most faithful and successful Mr. Baxter, whose Practice was copied after his *Gildas Salvianus*, and the Ministers of that Association? How diligent was Mr. Stubbs, Mr. Allen, Mr. Waddesworth, and others? But they were not worthy! This course we undertake to follow when we are ordained, this was the commendable Practice of the the ancient Bishops. *See Prosper de vita Contemplativa,*

templativa, 1. 2. c. 2. *tales Scriptura appellat Speculatores qui speculantur ad invicem*, &c. that watch the Actions of all, how every one lives in his House; how in the City, among the Citizens, &c. *lib. 1. cap. 21.* the Chapter answers the Title; a lamentable Description of a Priest living carnally, — *Cyprian. Epist. 40.* It troubled *St. Augustin*, that his Health would not serve him to do his Office: 'It grieves me more than it doth you perhaps, that my Infirmary is not sufficient for all the Cares which the Members of Christ require of me; *Epist. 588. Clero & Populo Hippo-nensi*, &c. How seldom do many People, especially Women and young Ones, in Parishes of five or six Miles Dimensions, or more, come to Church? Have not they Souls? Perhaps they would be careful of them, if they were told and convinced of their Case and Danger; but O how well do they take themselves to be! and think themselves excused from saving Ordinances, because they live so far from their Churches! The Learned *Dr. Bright* saith, somewhere in his Book of Prayer, that upon computation, there is a Priest for every fifty Persons in France. But alas! here in England there is not a Minister wholly for two or three Parishes, in many Counties; and this where I live, I have known a poor silly Curat travel on foot four or five Miles to read Prayers, in some very populous Parishes, where Esquires and Gentlemen live very thick. While we are careless of Souls, we teach poor Souls to be careless of their Salvation. If the Cry of spiritual Murther, Damnation, of Fire, of Hunger and Thirst, had any Entrance into our Hearts, we should mind Realities more than Formalities, and not persecute Preachers for Preaching, but send them forth in Peace, and commend them to God. But Preachers, yet not Preachers, make an Outcry against their Preaching; and others, that never knew the Need or Benefit of it, cannot endure them in their Coasts: But they who are more concerned for the Salvation of Souls, and Prosperity of the Work of Christ, should be otherwise affected. — But to use them as they are used, is not tenderly to consult the eternal Salvation and Good of many People; and suppose them as disaffected to the Church, whose Happiness they intensely wish, and would certainly part with more, if they had it, to come in again into the publick Service, than ever it cost them to forsake it, both against their Wills, and against their Interest, Ease, Quietness, and Honour. I am confident of what I write, tho I have not asked any of them the Question, because I do verily believe them to be wise, rational, and good Men. If some Places can be without them, tho I know not one, send them to Places which are in danger of being lost for want of such as they; and send them, as it is fit they should be received. (*How beautiful are the Feet of them that bring good Tidings!*) with respect and honour.

Confid.

Confid. VIII. As many Places have great need of them, so the Lord hath been with them, his Work hath prospered in their hands, even when their Disgraces and Dangers have been a great Obstruction. I never mean such a Conversion (as ends in Destruction) to Conceitdness, Pride, Faction; but I mean that which is to Salvation, by Holiness, Righteousness, and Peace. And for all their Hazards, Reproaches, and Disgraces, an understanding and wise People hear them, which they would never do, if they did not receive Edification. Is there nothing but Humor and Affectation in them? Affectation of what? of Fines, Losses, Frowns, Threatnings, Diminution of Civil Privileges, as far as some can deprive them? If this be their Hypocrisy, verily they have their Reward. They go to hear them for Scruples and Fanaticism. Let a Divine repent of such a meditated Calumny and Aspersions, lest he fall into them. *Whatsoever another intends to do, that*

So the Heathen objected; Sed non ideo bonum, quia multos convertit. — Quid hoc mali est, cuius rem gaudet? &c. Tertull. Apol. chap. 1. dars to make the Success of their Ministry of the Gospel, the Power of God to Salvation upon rational Souls, to lead Christian Lives, no greater Argument of divine Approbation, than the spreading of Mahometanism, and the Success of the Alcoran; if he never found the Efficacy of Grace, of the Spirit, Word, and Sacraments upon his Heart, let him turn his Thoughts and his Time, if not his Pen, to make ready for his Judgment, and to secure his Peace, rather than to rake into Sores and Ulcers, and keep them open, to get Money, as some Beggars do their Sores.

Confid. IX. A safe and speedy Union of Dissenters, as nearly united as possibly can be made, is most desirous, that there may be a happy End put to their many Sufferings. Religion and Humanity can take no pleasure in the deserved Punishments of Men; the Murmurs and Complaints of Sufferers stir and move Compassions; and Piety holds the Hand even of Justice, in all Cases in which Necessity is not urgent and manifest. The Evil of Separation hath been opened, when the Evil of their Sufferings hath not been touched upon: They are urged with the first, but that is but one Side of the Evil; let us search into the other Sore, to take the whole Weight and Compass of the Mischief that lies upon the Protestant Religion; and both run down from the same Cause; and he that would stop the Current of Evil in divided Streams, and dry up the Flood of Afflictions and Miseries, must stop it at the Well-head of the Cause. They are urged to enter into the Communion of the Church as by Law established,

established, because of the Mischief of their Separations: and it would be a special Service to move our Governors to make their Return as easy as may be, by opening the Scandal of their Sufferings. If their Consent to our Injunctions were gained, the Controversy would be at an end, and this Prosecution also: But that being not like to be attained this way, the Continuance of the Separation is more for the good and profit of the Church, than their Sufferings: for while they enjoy their Liberty, the Gospel is preached, and they that are regenerate, and called, and gathered to Christ, are gathered to the Catholick Church, tho' not united unto a particular Church, in some certain Bonds of external Communion. But if they were totally suppressed, and where they are most narrowly watched and kept in, thousands of Souls would lose the Benefit of their Labours, and their Hearts are like to be more estranged from us; and the Church will still lose the Content and Comfort of their Communion. The supposed and aggravated Sin and Evil of the Separation, is doubled by their Sufferings, and made more incurable by the Exasperation. We see and taste the Fruit of above twenty Years Proceedings, and better cannot be expected, but much worse may be feared.

To argue for a Release from their Sufferings, because they have suffered deeply, may seem weak and insequent: but take them in a Complex of Causes and Circumstances, and I do hope the Argument may prove a Matter of Consideration, to them that are concerned in these great Matters.

If a Man should move for a Suspension of the Laws against Malefactors, thus: Millions have suffered Imprisonment and Death, and therefore spare them: the Argument is not only ridiculous and weak, but weak and sinful: because they are Malefactors, and the Laws of God, both natural and revealed, require it: and there would be no Safety to the Lives of Innocents, nor of Civil Rights and Possessions.

But to argue, Our dissenting Brethren have suffered much, therefore forbear to inflict more Punishments upon them, is not without some Strength, and convinctive Evidence.

The performance of Religious Exercises in a different Form, is no such Offence and Crime, as deserves to be punished, before the Penal Laws decree the Penalties. The Difference of the Administrations, is made by the diverse using or disusing of Things indifferent, some extending their Liberty further than others. To use Christian Liberty (wisely, and as much as may be, inoffensively) is no punishable Crime, but a Duty: and if there be not a Liberty in indifferent Things, there is none at all.

2. But if it were a Matter possible, yet of such Things as are punish-
able, before a Penal Law is made, or *non ideo sequitur eam* (penam)
deberi recipi, quia hoc pendet de constitutione finium ob quos poena instituta est,
eum ipse poena. as *Gratius* writes, *De Jure Bell. & Pac. lib. 2. cap. 4.*

Now what can be the Ends of those Penal Constitutions?

1. Unity of Mind with our Governors in those Things enjoined; that
seems to be the Reason of the Assent and Consent; which none can be of,
but such as were so minded before it was required, all Reasons and Circum-
stances perpended. But that all should be of the same mind, is impossible in
any State: That's an End not attainable, and they who propose it, propose
only for themselves; and them of the same Judgment with them; and ex-
clude the rest, whom the Lord hath received. It was a wise, and is a ce-
lebrated Saying of the Emperor *Maximilian* the Second, to *Augustus* of
Spain, when he interposed for Peace, in the *Ubiquitarian* Controversies
and Persecution. The Duke told him, he would have all his Ministers
agree with him, and among one another: to which the Emperor answered,
*Ego in negotiis ad fidem & conscientiam persisterem, nec usum vel velim con-
sensum, effere necessitatem aliquam credidit. Sed scribo consensum, &c.* I know
that will be lost labour, and that it is grievous and dangerous in it self.
Id. nunquam passus, inquit Imperator, utique nostrum est imperare Conscientiis,
aut ad fidem quaquam coigere. *Pocellus Histor. Caeterum, p. 361.* to *Hobbes*
see *Summa Controv. cum Lutheranis, p. 657.*

2. The Peace of the Church and State may be aimed at: Can there be
Peace in the House of God, whilst one Fellow-Servant smites another?
Surely that is not the way to Peace. Which brings to my mind that of
the Learned *Harnbeck*. (*Oratio de Ecclesiasticis inter se Communicationibus*.)
If we shall receive or treat them other wise than Brethren, whom Christ
doth not disdain, or think unworthy of so great a Name, Place, and
Honour. *Atque hoc Christianis charitatis communicationis est fundamentum.*
This is the Foundation also of all Christian and Ecclesiastical Love and
Charity, among all Christian Churches and Congregations through the
World. Let others despise the common Name of Brethren, I never call
to mind, without a singular Affection of Piety, that holy and singu-
lar hearted Custom among the Ancients, both of the Jewish and Christian
Age, when they saluted one another by no other Name than that
of Brethren: So did the Tongue express the Mind; and testify their Faith
and Love, *Ecce Communicatio pacis, & appellatio fraternitatis, ut Tertullianus*
apostolus. Faith and Love to God, and Reconciliation with his heavenly
Majesty, as a Father, & Participation of the same divine Nature, & mu-
tual Acknowledgment of the Marks and Lineaments of God's Children,

2. A Consent in the same substantial Truths, and in the same Faith in God, and forbearing one another, are more sure Ways to Peace, than Menaces and Force. *At quibus dignis fratribus & amicis & dilectis* : Who have acknowledged one Father, God; who have drunk in the same Spirit of Holiness; who have breathed out of one Womb of the same Inheritance, to the same Light of Truth. *Titell. ad Gentem*. But we have other kind of Marks and Names of Distinction; we seem to reject all spiritual Kindred with them, and extinguish Love, to compose Differences, and to make Peace. Will these Ways ever lead us to Peace?

2. For the Peace of the State, this may be thought of. Though God's great Mercy we find, that the Controversy of *Conformity* and *Nonconformity* hath not disturbed the Quietness of the State, but as some have made use of it: And Church-Peace should be most earnestly followed, that the State may know the Blessedness of being incorporated with the Church in the same Government; and finding the Blessing of Religion to be so great, may be the more tender of its Welfare. The Dissenters have not only obeyed Warrants, but have made their appearance without Warrants, when but called to it by some that had no Warrants. So far have they been from giving occasion to the *Majesty* to come armed upon them; but some will have it so. And the Dissenters give, or are ready to give, the same Security for the Peace, that others do that enjoy it.

3. The Dissenters complain of the Laws, but much more for their Sufferings, either besides, or contrary to, or above the Laws; and to put an end to their Sufferings, is to put an end to the Illegalities of many of their Prosecutors. The many Appeals and Actions, or the forbearing to make Appeals when there hath been apparent Cause, the many Errors found out in Courts of Justice, where it hath been done them in the Proceedings of Informers and others, prove this.

4. To put an End to these Vexations and Sufferings, is the only way to restrain much Impiety and Unrighteousness in many Men, and to deliver them from provoking & tempting God to plague & punish them that carry on this Work. The Spirit of Persecution entered not into the Church, till Men walked after the Flesh; and after that Persecutors have fallen upon the Servants of God, the Wrath of God punished the Persecutors. Men should abstain from declaring their dislike, disaffection, and enmity to Godliness, if they loved themselves.

5. Yea, moreover, I do not see how any of the Instruments in the Sufferings of our Christian Brethren, can go on, and not sin grievously against God, Men, and Themselves. It is plain, that they neglect all the solemn and publick Worship of God; the standing Means of their own Salvation, while they lie in wait to take the Worshipers of God.

what their Practice is in other Duties of Religion, Truth, and common Honesty, is well known: They come behind none of their Father's Children, in Lies, Falſe Witneſſes, confirmed by impudent and notorious Swearing.

6. If this Way be not pleaſing to God, try another: if it be not bleſſed with Succeſs, try ſome other. It was the wife Couſel of *Levia* to *Auguſtus*, perplexed about the Conſpiracy of *Cinna*, which that wife Emperor took: *Fac quod Medici ſolent, qui ubi uſitata remedia non procedant, tentant contraria*; ſeveritate nihil proficiſſe. *Sev. de Clemens*. It is known indeed, that the Advantages of all temporal Penalties to the Catholick Church changed *St. Auguſtin's* Judgment from Lenity to ſome Severity; but never changed it from a ſweet Moderation to a Rigor, making no difference between ſome and others, as appear in his ſeveral Letters of Interdiction for the *Donatiſts*. And for all that, ſome are ſo ſtick upon *St. Auguſtin*, as to note, that he but narrowly got to Heaven before *Hippa* was taken, for that hand which he had in that Motion. The Severity of the Northern Monarchs in *Sweden* and *Danmark*, is but ill applied to our Caſe, who cannot reaſonably eſtablish our Conformity, without the Extinguiſhing or Banishment of an excellent great Number of Chriſtians, that have deſcended from, and whole Predeceſſors ſprung up together with the Reformation.

Laſtly Conſider, whether it be not better for the Church, and the Chriſtian Kingdom, to take off theſe Afflictors from chaſing that part of Chriſt's divided Flock, than ſuffer them to go on? For how can that be pleaſing to Chriſt, wherein the Enemy of Mankind, the Enemy of Chriſtians above all Mankind, and the Enemy of Proteſtants more than of any Chriſtians, becauſe of their clearer Lights and Emity, and the Enemy of the ſincerely Pious above all other Proteſtants, hath ſo openly appeared and ſtood in Lies, Scandals, Falſe Witneſſes, Perjuries, Violence, and Unmercifulneſs. This is a ſurer way to loſe, than to gain them.

Objeſt. If they are loſt, who can help it? How can they be united to us, that are not united among themſelves? They are very far from being of a piece. Besides *Presbyterians* and *Independents*, there are *Anabaptiſts*, *Millenarians*, *Antichriſtians*, *Quakers*, &c. ſhould we yield to any one of theſe, we are yet as far from gaining the reſt, as we are now from uniting all. Thus the Reverend Peace-maker of *Cork*, *pag. 29*.

Now this Objection of the Difficulty, is not paſſ ſome conſiderable Reply.

1. What if the Bundle of Arrows be broken, yet let us gather up as many as we can: our Arrows will be the more againſt our common Enemy.

Enchyr. Gain any of them, and we shall be the more and stronger by that Addition.

3. Except the *Presbyterians*, the most of the other Dissenters agree in their Models of Government: for that which you call the *Unitarian* granted nothing but a total power, which is the worst of all.

4. Is it Reason and Charity, that those who would unite, shall not because all will not, upon some Abstraction?

5. Gain some, and they will help to draw in others.

6. The more are united, the fewer remain to be tolerated: by which Toleration I mean no more, but a forbearing one another in Love, with the use of Gospel-Means to convert and gain them, if possible; and not the Civil Sword to restrain and suppress them, when it shall be necessary and dangerous to the State; but not before.

And I leave these to make a little Digression upon this Head, respecting the several Parties named.

1. The *Presbyterians*, so called, doth not sit upon that Point of Government. He offers to oblige.

2. The chief of the *Congregational* are Men of great Worth, Learning, Sobriety, and Holiness; and they are but few, and never like to be many, in the Countreys, but but few in Cities and populous Places.

3. The *Anabaptists* is an Independent Government, for such I know, what will do the one good, I will do the other, in this point. And these are either simply scrupulous, or the Point of Baptism, or else compounded of other Doctrines. The first sort are reputed peaceable and holy Men, by them that write against them, as Mr. Baxter, Mr. Okey, Wm., and Mr. J. *Sept. Whiston*. The second may be kept in Order and Quiet, as easily as our careless ignorant, and debauched Sect, that go under another Name.

4. The *Antinomians* teach a Doctrine of Licence, yet think in the point of Impartation, to be the Antipapist, and the Protestant, and falls in among others in point of Church-Discipline.

5. The *Milnerians*, either notionally so, and then his Faith is to himself not so imaginatively, and so he is to be watched and coerced, and Presbyterians and Independents will help.

6. Lastly, The *Quakers* must have the Right of Humanity, and The Honour of all good Men. Sir *Marshall Hall*, determined their Right in the Point of Marriage. My Soul grieves for them. Some of them, that I know, are a sort of Christians; they do not give enough to the Scriptures, which as far as I know, is their great Error, from whence the rest proceed. Their spiritual lusts are so strong, that they are good for nothing, indeed, but I wish it were considered, that some Magistrates, in their extreme Heat and Violence, did urge them with Oaths when there was no cause for it.

and picking quarrels with their Scriptures, they fell to a hasty and violent Execution of their own violent Passions; more than the Law. They who scrupled Swearing, did call God to Witness, and did protest and promise Loyalty and Obedience, but it was not accepted, they offered the Security of their Words, and their Bodies to the Law, when found Transgressors against the Peace. But they were hurried and crowded into Prisons, and ill used in many Prisons, and so became hardened, and at length modell'd into an exact Policy. Yet they are Men and Natives, and whether Men shall forfeit their Goods and Liberties, for a Dissent in Religion, by any Gospel-Rule, or Rules of Christian Equity, is a great Question, and the Negative past doubt as yet. If they have a natural Right to Marriage, and those Contracts, and the not made after the Liturgy, they have a natural Right to Society among us; and our Rule is, To walk honestly towards them, as they that are without. There are many Things commendable in them.

These are the noted Sects looked upon with an evil eye, as dangerous Men; and yet there are other Sects very pious, but what Course is taken with them? Are there not Hobbists and Calveists, were there were more of these since the Reformation than now? Witness the great Number of Sermons preached and printed, the great Numbers of Tracts, the large Volumes of, Sir, Matthew Hale, and others, against Atheism. Are these multiplied without cause? If not, there is a great medicine of Atheism. What shall be done with the Sects of Infidels, Blasphemers, God-dishonouring Drunkards, Gamblers, Whoremongers, and their Meeting-Houses, their regular Men without College, Purphlozing Clubs, Paper-Indendiaries, and the Society of Beggars and Vagrants, that are out of Church? What do you call those Places, where many about Nobility and Gentry, either leaped in, were confirmed in their Levity, Lusts, and are furnished with a sort of Wit and Words, that make the Word of Christ, and of Wisdom, uplaycock and mangle, where many have assumed the Gifts of Confidence and Immoralities? where Swords have been drawn, and Blood shed, but never indicted for Riots? Why have Persons learned to put off God, and Conscience, and Counsel, with witty answers, to excuse their long lying in Bed, till Prayers, and Sermons, and Sacraments are over, and their long drowsing till Dinner, to make their Afternoon Visit before the Lord or Images, as themselves? Who can reckon all the Sects that dissent from Christ's Gospel, from their Baptismal Vow, that say they are for the Publick, tho they rarely visit them, for the Religion established by Law, with a secret Reservation, except what requires them to be pious and holy? O the low Estate of Christian Religion, even among them that have the general Name of Christians! May it never take root such Persons, and Places for Religious Exercises, than with most of those, who perhaps never

never had more than a private Reproof, and they will be sparing of Complaints!

And now I turn in from this Digression, to give a few Narratives of the Nonconformists' Sufferings, in which it will plainly appear,

1. Perhaps no Law was ever executed with more Violence and Partiality, or Proceedings with less Success, and more Mistakes and Errors in Proceedings, more arbitrarily and illegally, than those against Dissenting Protestants.

2. It is no wonder they have been so unsuccessful to bring them in, if you respect both Persons and Methods unlike to effect that End.

3. How it concerns all Men, according to their Places and Power, to petition a Cessation of these Proceedings : (1.) To put an end to the gross Wickedness of many Instruments, who take occasion from the Laws to exercise their Inreligion and Wickedness, (2.) To prevent further Judgments upon many particular Families and Persons, and the provoking of Christ to take away his Gospel from us, when many of his Servants are so ill used, and his Ordinances blasphemed, and Wickedness committed.

4. The various Appearances of God, both in Judgment and Mercy, in this very Proceeding.

5. Let it be judg'd and resolv'd soberly, whether this way be not a greater Scandal to the Protestant Religion, than the Separation is, as great as it is.

6. Those who are glad of the Law, have no cause to think the very Execution of any great use to their Design, provided, (1.) They proceed against the Nonconformists strictly according to the Scope of the Law : (2.) According to the Direction of it, as to Proofs and Conviction : And if Men did not go beyond it, they could never have done what they have done.

7. It will be manifest, that they are not punished for Sedition, Rebellion, or any Crime of that Infamy and Note, by the various kinds of Prosecutions and Punishments.

8. Some are punished in several Courts, and several ways.

9. How the Adversaries of the Nonconformists have been defeated of their Purposes : some brought to Ruine, and miserable Ends ; some penitent and converted, and all or most frustrated of their Designs.

10. How grossly many have acted against all Humanity and Law, against God, against that Reverence which is due to the King, and his own Act. And many other Things will occur in the ensuing Narratives.

I am not void of Sense, as not to know what a tender Point I have in hand, and what Persons are like to be provoked; but I do write to call them to Repentance, to move others to Compassion, and to give Warning to them that need it; and finally to satisfy the Incredulity of some of our Brethren, that took upon

See the Rev. Bishop of Cork, pag. 79.

the Reports of some of the Nonconformists as next to fabulous, aggravated, to make their Inflictors odious, and their Sufferings grievous. My Collections are but few, in comparison of what others may make, who have better Advantages and Helps than I have. And if any Person shall reproach me, as dishonouring the Government of the Church; let them know, (1.) The Things I write are not Fictions and Calumnies. (2.) These Instruments and the Government are not all one. (3.) It is fit these Things should be known, to prevent Divine Wrath and Vengeance.

I might digest this Account into several Periods: Before the Act of Uniformity came out, and after; before the Act against Contumacy; and Oxford Five-Mile Act, and after; till the King's Indulgence, and after. And also shew by what Acts the Dissenters have suffered, and to what degrees. And I desire it may be noted, that there hath been no respect shewed,

1. To Men of approved Loyalty.
2. Nor to Men in Episcopal Orders.
3. Nor to their reading of the Common Prayer.
4. Nor to the King's Declaration, before the Parliament did address to call it in.

By all which it will clearly appear, what kind of Men, and to what Scope they acted, that have appeared most active in these Proceedings.

I begin with the famous Sufferings of Mr. Andrew Passey, Rector of *Wem* in *Shropshire*. In Decemb. 1660, he was fetched from his own House to *Salop*, by six Souldiers, who pretended to have, but shewed no Warrant. The Marshal told him, he was his Prisoner, and next morning brought him before the Deputy-Lieutenant, who asked him, If he would take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, like the others; He had taken them long ago, and would therefore take them again, if they required it; and did so.

They told him, Complaints were made against him, (1.) For not Conforming. (2.) For seditious Preaching. To the first, he pleaded the King's Declaration. As to the second, might be explained, and Particulars proved. They charged him with saying, There were more Sins committed (then) in one Month, than in twenty Years before; Inferring thence,

thence, besides the Scandal to the King's Government, that he accounted the King's Murther no Sin, which was committed within that time. His Accusers were then in Town, but appeared not; and he was discharged of his Imprisonment without Fees, and appointed to appear, when his Accusers should be summoned to appear face to face, and was admonished to conform.

Easter following, one of his worst Enemies, by a Faction, was made Church-warden for the Year 1661. And among other things, he encouraged the Profanation of the Lord's Day, and opposed an ancient Lecture which of course returned to that Town, and procured a Letter from the *Deputy Lieutenants*, to a Justice of Peace in the Parish, to hinder it. The Jail Tuesday in November, hearing no Bell ring, he went to know the Reason: He found the Church-Doors lock'd against him, and that Church-warden owned it was his Act, and told him he should not go in, tho he told him he would preach himself. But by an Accident he got in, tho with difficulty, and some danger; and two Lecturers preached to a great Auditory of Neighbour-Ministers, and People. Next day he, the Preachers, and Ministers that heard, were by the High-Constable summoned before the *Deputy Lieutenants*. He and one of the Preachers (Mr. Lawrence) were committed to Prison, the rest checked and dismissed. After four days Mr. Lawrence was released; but Mr. Parsons was detained, upon pretence of other Matter, amounting to Sedition, if not Treason. He could not obtain the Sight of the Articles, yet obtained leave to return home upon Security, and limited not to go above five Miles from home, and to appear when sent for. In the mean time one of the *Deputy Lieutenants* told him, they could not resist his Adversaries Importunity, who with nine more, and some of them in Drink, gave in Depositions against him.

Jan. 29. The Marshal, with five Troopery, came galloping to his Door, (where he met them) entered his House, shewed a Warrant from Sir E. B. Commander in chief of the Forces in *Salop*, to bring him before him; who told him, he had an Order from the Deputy to commit him close Prisoner, under the Marshal's hand, for Things of a high Nature. During six Weeks Imprisonment, he used all means to obtain a Copy of the Depositions; at the end of which six Weeks, the Power of the Deputies expiring by the Act for the *Militia*, they resolved to leave him bound, and commit him, as Justices of the Peace, upon suspicion of Treason, to the Common-Goal.

March 2. on the same Day, came down a Letter from the Right Honourable the Lord Newport, Lord Lieutenant, from London, which one that signed his Commitment intercepted, and kept from him ten days, and

was

was afterwards brought him by a Friend of the Gentleman, which gave Order for his Release, upon Security to return when sent for: but he was not released.

After eight Weeks abode in the Common-Goal, the Lord N. brought down a Commission of Oyer and Terminer out of the Crown-Office, with a special Order under the Seal-Manual, to the same Lord, and one of the Justices in *Ludlow*, and eight more Gentlemen, (whereof three only were present) to try the said A. P. Clerk, late of *Wem*.

May 28. the Commission was executed, the Justice gave the Charge to this purpose: A Minister was to be tried, all *Presbyterian Ministers* reflected upon, among whom Mr. Baxter was particularly named. In the Afternoon the Grand-Inquest brought in their Bill. The Court was guarded with Souldiers; Mr. *Parsons* was brought to the Bar, commanded to hold up his hand; the Indictment was read, and he required to plead.

Before he pleaded, he, after much earnestness in desiring, and several Denials, was allowed to speak to the Court, which he did briefly, and as well as he could, being abused by word and deed, by a Souldier that stood by to daunt him. He blessed God, that at length he might know for what he was so long imprisoned; that it was a Privilege to be tried by a Peer of the Realm, whose Honour made up the defect of an Oath; hoped the rest of the Gentlemen, being Persons of great Repute and Abilities, and was confident nothing should be done but according to Law and Equity: He heard well of the Jury, and presumed, they had the Conscience and Discretion to judg of his Prosecutors, as they found them free from Malice, Partiality, and a bad Life.

He craved a Copy of his *Indictment*, and Counsel. He was earnestly commanded to plead, or they would proceed against him as Mute, which he did, first begging his Pleading might not be a Prejudice to him, as to his Exceptions against the *Indictment*; which was promised. After which he pleaded, *Not guilty*, and put himself upon God and his Country.

He was commanded to hold up his hand a second time, and another *Indictment* was read; which he did as before.

He was commanded a third time to hold up his hand, and a third *Indictment* was read, which was only for *Nonconformity*, to which he presently pleaded.

His learned Councel first moved for Copies of the *Indictments*. Copies of the two latter were granted; but the first denied; but being read to them again, they took such notice of it, that they were enabled to plead to it next morning, with great satisfaction.

The Matter of the Indictment was: Not having the Fear of God, nor
ward by the Insigation of the Devil, and a malicious Mind against the
King and Government, to bring his People into hatred of his Person
and Government, did maliciously preach, Octob. 13. 1661.

1. There was more Sin committed now in a Month, than in a Year, for
twenty Years past.

2. When there were good Judges and Kings in Israel, the People feared the
Lord; but when there were wicked Judges and Kings, then every one did what
was good in his own Eye.

3. There was better Preaching now, than was since the Apostles Times.

4. That God will call us all to account for our Votes and Proclamations, I must
not name the Covenant.

These Words were put in the Indictment, and made to come under the
Act for the Preservation of the King's Person.

The Words in the second Indictment were: That a King, who is driven
out of his Kingdom by his Subjects, and afterwards by Providence he returneth
peaceably, and then seileth his Militia, and then having made himself strong,
beginneth to play his Pranks, and rules at his pleasure, like a King or Tyrant:
So the Devil comes to a Man's Elbow, and then gets possession of his Heart, and
then will play his Tricks.

But the Words spoken by him were these, and in his Notes, and attested
by four Men who wrote after him, and ready to be testified by twenty more
ready in Court; speaking of the Power and Kingdom of the Devil, which
he got by degrees in wicked Mens Hearts: It is with the Devil, as with a
King, who when he is seiled in his Dominion, hath disposed of his Militia, and
Ministers of State, he may do what he will: Indeed till this be done, he may do
as he may: So Satan, when he hath once put out the Eyes of the Conscience,
and seared it, and made the Will of his Party, and charmed the Affections, he
may now do what he will.

It grew late, and his Prosecutors were not called till the next day:
therefore he only asserted his Innocency, and Clearness of Conscience,
that he said nothing to bring his Loyalty into suspicion, or himself under
the Law. But Judge P. aggravated the Words, in the most uncharitable
Construction, at large, and said in his Conscience, he meant it of the
King.

He pleaded, the Time limited in the Act was past before Indicted, and
other Arguments, which his Counsel did learnedly and rationally manage:
But the Judge told them, the Court would over-rule: Next day he was
brought to the Bar, desired his Adversaries might be near him, face to face,
but it was not granted, but stood where he could not hear them.

Living

F

The

The Jury being called to pass on the first Indictment, he moved, he might make peremptory Challenges; the Judge answered, No. Of Sixty eight that were said to be returned, there were but three, or four of them that were called; the rest were privately sent to: They lived remote fr m him and so he could not challenge with cause. The Prosecutors were nine, but most of them were passive, drawn in by the Subtily of the Church-warden, and his Brother, who swore directly the Words in the first Indictment, but missed the Time when he spoke. Mr. Parsons denied the Words; and his Counsel pleaded, the Words were not criminal. The Jury being instructed, were sent forth, and presently returned him, Guilty, and followed the Instructions more than the Evidence; as one of themselves told a Friend of Mr. P. And so it proved, as his Prosecutors had given out.

Such another Jury past upon the second Indictment, of Strangers, not a third part of them mentioned in the Return.

The Church-warden and his Brother swore the very Words; and a third, the Substance, but differing from them.

Mr. P. denied the Words, and had four substantial Witnesses, who had taken the Words exactly from his Mouth, when he preached. These, and twenty more, did assert the Truth in another place, who were not regarded in the Court.

His Counsel pleaded, The Words were not proved; and if proved, were not within the Act.

Mr. Parsons did openly assert his Loyalty, by running several Hazards of Life and Estate, when the King passed with his Army to Worcester; and that he sent a Horse and Arms to the Chester Business; besides his constant Praying for him on occasional Preaching, his Adversaries being Judges.

But, as it was foretold, the Jury brought him in Guilty.

The Sentence was, for the first Indictment he was fined an hundred Pounds.

The like for the second; and to lie in Prison till the Fines were paid. He was before his Conviction made incapable of any Ecclesiastical Preferment. After Sentence past, he only said, Blessed be God.

During the Trials many Incivilities past: A grave and reverend Minister of Shrewsbury was struck by a Souldier in open Court; and other godly and reverend Ministers of the Country were scornfully thrust out of the Court; and his Friends in Town durst not be present at his Trial. And Friends and Foes concluded he should die, or at least be undone.

After his Trial, he continued near three Months in Prison, till the Lord Newport, unknown to him, procured the King's Pardon for his Fine. His

Living

Living was presently sequestered by the Chancellor of *Litchfield*. And perhaps the Greatness of his Parsonage made him the more obnoxious; for he told them in open Court, that his Benefice was condemned long ago, and that 400 *l.* was bidden for it by a great Man in the County; the Loss of which amounts by this time to between five and six thousand Pounds.

A Gentleman was tried with him, for stabbing his own Servant, of which there was cleat Proof, and his Nose felt a bleeding in open Court, but was brought in, *Not guilty*.

One of the Jury, when he had considered what was done, came afterwards much dejected to Mr. P. and told him, the Foreman went against the Sence of the Major Part: He also went to the Judge, and told him so, who replied, he need not trouble himself about that, with other Words.

And this was the End of this great Malice and Violence of ill Men.

Let us observe: A Minister of approved Loyalty, who ventured Life and Estate for the King's Restoration, at *Worcester*, and in *Cheshire*, becomes often imprisoned, brought, like a Traitor, to hold up his Hand, which he had often lifted up to God in Prayer for the King; the Court guarded with Troopers, and not the Sheriffs Men; his Friends and Comforters were not permitted to stand by him; the Indictments found, against better Evidence of better Auditors, even four that wrote Sermon Notes, against the common Sense of a Jury made: And after all this (loyal) Traitor (for before the Trial, and in it, his Words were said to amount to Treason) is only Fined, committed till it be paid, and after three Months, the Fine remitted. And this formidable Trial was on part of the high Days, May 29, in which our Lord had prevailed with God to see it, more than all his Adversaries, had no matter of Joy left him upon it, but the rejoicing of his own Conscience.

This brings to my mind; how touchy and capricious many Men were at Preachers and Sermons in those Days, of which I could give several Instances in but one eminent Conforming Minister, who suffered very much by quarrelsome and injudicious Hearers.

About the same time many eminent and good Ministers were brought into Trouble and Prison; and 'tis not unlikely but the Judge might mean the Presbyterians in *Worcestershire*, of which an Account is printed and abridged by Mr. Care, in Part of the *History of the Popish Plots*.

Was it like that any thing of Accommodation, or Union of our woful Breaches, could ensue such Proceedings? Is the Suspicion groundless, that there was a Design to keep out such Men as these? And that Politicians made great use of these Mock-Plots, to give colour to their Designs,

which afterwards they formed. And some thought themselves never well in, unless some others might be ejected. Nonconformity was a Crime in Mr. P. before our Act of Uniformity came out, and whilst the King's Declaration only commended the Use of the old Common-Prayer Book, as far as Men could, and declared, no Man should be punished for Nonconformity.

Mr. John Whislock, Vicar of St. Mary's in Nottingham, after the King's Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs came forth, and before the Act of Uniformity took place, was indicted at the Sessions in Nottingham, for not reading Common-Prayer.

July 2. He was cited into the Ecclesiastical Court; and in case he should refuse to read Common-Prayer in the Surplice, in that Parish-Church, he should be suspended within the Archdeaconry of Nottingham, and his Church to be sequestered.

Mr. John Barne was suspended the same time; and July 7. the Order of the Court passed for the publication of their Suspension, for not obeying the Monition of the Court. Upon the same day there was an Order of the Court for sequestering the Profits, with this Expression, *Sum Jam legitime necesse est Curiam petere.* [Note, This was before the Suspension was published and denounced, and whilst the King's Declaration professed Indulgence.]

In the same manner was Mr. John Barne indicted and suspended, and his Church (St. Peter's in Nottingham) sequestered, and he forced to leave his Freehold, in which he lived.

July 26. 1646. Mr. William Bagwold, Minister of St. Mary's in Nottingham, was peremptorily inhibited Preaching, and excommunicated, and to appear at the Consistory-Court at York, within 8 Days, on pain, which time no Articles were produced against him, nor he was suspended, and referred to the Visitation, September following, at which he appeared, and received these Articles, in which it was said, Man, by the Laws and Constitutions of this Realm, is to preach, and administer the Sacraments, and do Ecclesiastically, according to the Doctrine standing within the Church, as done in the Parish of St. Mary's in Nottingham. (And the 26th of July, 1646, he was inhibited Preaching in St. Mary's; and in any other Place in the Diocese of York, (which was not in the Inhibition) and Robert Mughst was suspended 64 Days, once on more he had preached where, in which was not true. He refused to give his Absconder under his hand, because the Articles intimated the Act of Indulgence, a fact which he was admitted three times, immediately once, after another, and then excommunicated,

by Dr. Burdett, Chancellor of York, and Septemb. 15. issued out his Order for the publication of it, *propter ipsius manifestam contumaciam, in non exhibendo responsa articulis*. Hearing of a purpose to take out the Writ *De Exco[m]muni. capiend.* he was necessitated to go to London; and upon suggestion in the Court of Common-Pleas, of the Violation of the Act of Indemnity, the Lord Chief Justice *Bridgman*, and the other Judges, granted him an Order, *Hilar. 14.* In Easter Term following, he was constrained to London, and to stay there the whole Term, to see if Dr. B. would sit wth Cause; but he never appeared, and so Mr. R. heard no more of it, tho it was not taken off till the last Act of Indemnity. All which was a great Charge to Mr. Reynolds.

It is well known, what Endeavours were us'd, to remove the Reverend and Learned Dr. Tuckney, from his Professorship of Divinity, and Mastership of St. John's in Cambridge, betimes, Anno 1660, before he came to the Trial of *Nonconformity* by Articles, which could not affect him. But a gracious Letter from the King was procured, and substituted to by the said Reverend Doctor; a Copy of which is, as followeth.

C. R.

W^{HEREAS} we are credibly informed, that Dr. Anthony Tuckney, Master of St. John's College, and one of the Professors of Divinity in our University of Cambridge, is well stricken in Years, and by reason of his Age, and some Infirmities of Body, may not hereafter be so well able to undergo the Burden of those two Places; We, out of Our Princely Care, both of what Our University and the said Dr. Tuckney, do judge it meet, that he the said Dr. T. before the end of this instant June, do recede from the aforesaid Mastership, and Professors Place, with the Rectory of Summerham, annexed therunto by the Grace and Favour of Our Royal Grandfather: Which Signification of Our Said Pleading, if the said Dr. T. shall submit unto, We shall be so well-pleased withal, that We shall graciously accept thereof, and will be ready to remember it for his Good, upon any just occasion. And further, taking into Our Princely Consideration, the great Pain, and Diligence, of the said Doctor, in the discharge of the said Professors Place, without that Benefit which should have been received by him from the said Rectory of Summerham, (which, during the late unhappy and rapacious Times, was unjustly detained from him) upon that his Submission, Our Will and Pleasure is, and We do hereby order, That whatsoever Person, during the natural Life of the said Dr. T. shall after his Cession, be elected or promoted to the said Professors Place, shall, before their respective Admissions thereunto, give sufficient Assurance in Law to the said Dr.

Dr. T. for the Yearly Payment of 100 l. out of the Rectory of Summerham, to the said Dr. T. (for the Reward of his former Pains) by even and equal Portions, at four usual Feasts of the Year: i. e. at the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour, at the Annunciation of the B. Virgin, the Birth of St. John Baptist, and the Feast of Michael the Archangel: during the Continuance of the said Professor, and the natural Life of the said Dr. T. any Grant or Statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at our Court at
Whitehall, June 1. 1661.

By his Majesty's Command,

EDW. NICHOLAS.

The Doctor received the 100 l. per an. many Years, from his Successor in both his Places, Dr. Gunning, the now Lord Bishop of Ely.

Some went another way to work against some eminent and powerful Men in Oxford, as is to be seen in a forged Letter sent to Mr. Martin, the Town-Clerk, upon which some of the Militia Troops came to suppress or prevent a Plot, made and laid by some more skillful in that Art, than the Reverend Persons named to be in it. [See Care's 2d Part of the History of the Popish Plot.]

Before the Act of Uniformity came out, twenty of the Auditors of two Sister Ministers, who preached at Boston-Church in Nottinghamshire, were indicted for a Conventicle.

Mr. Oliver Heywood, Minister of Coty, near Halifax, was prosecuted in the Consistory at York, for not reading Common-Prayer, a whole Year before the Act of Uniformity commenced; and whilst his Majesty's Declaration granted an Indulgence, was suspended, June 29. 1661. and excommunicated, and could not by any Intercession be absolved by Dr. B. unless he would take an Oath, *parando just. & stando mandatis Regis*. And going to hear Sermons at Halifax, Dr. H. desired him to forbear, being an Excommunicate; and at Coty one made an Attempt to thrust him out of Church, for the same reason; and Twelve-pence a Sunday was demanded of him, for not coming to Church, during this Exclusion. And at length a Writ came out; but the Bayliff who was to serve it, favoured him so much as to smother it, and so he escaped the Prison.

Many that were strongly inclined to Unity and Peace, and forbore to conform, as far as they could, in hopes of reforming some Things, and leaving Things most scrupled, or least indifferent, were urged by violent

Persons

Persons with Conformity, before the new Law was made; and strange Informations and Reports were raised against worthy Men, and occasion taken from their scrupling some Things, to represent them as unpeaceable, and unfit for Union; and as if they were hatching new Mischiefs, which their Soules abhorred, stricter Laws must be made on purpose, not (as it proved) for the Publick Good, but private Turns.

We may not forget who were very forward in suppressing Lectures, and dissolving those Combinations which had for many Years preserved the Truths of God fresh in the Minds of Multitudes of People, which otherwise had been lost, or in danger; in unsettled Times, kept Ministers to their Studies, Love, and Acquaintance among them, and were managed without offence, or hindrance to our National Settlement. Some of the Suppressors were Gentlemen in Power, and meer Tools in other Mens hands, and these listened to false Reports of Whisperers and Tale-bearers; or else they were Persons of ungodly Lives, such as prosecuted Mr. *Parsone*, ignorant and debauched Persons, that served their Lusts.

Such were Enemies to the Reverend Mr. *Barret* at *Nottingham*. He presented the Book of Common-Prayer to him, a Whoremonger, cast out of the Town-Council, leaving his own Wife to work for her Living, or shift as she could for her self, he took another Man's Wife away with him a great way off, and kept her several Years. Another Person, who was to testify that the Book was tendered to him, was an Attorney, who afterwards hired an Adversary of the said Mr. *Barret* to put a forged Bond of 400 *l.* for Non-payment of 200 *l.* in Suit against him. And that Mr. *Barret* might not have Remedy in Chancery, he was presented in the Spiritual Court, where it had soon come to an Excommunication, had he not removed out of the Diocess, into *Litchfield* Diocess. And that Attorney, when the Commissioners sat upon the matter of the Bond, feared to come out of Doors, being then in Debt, (tho' a landed Man, and likely to have flourished in the World.)

These, and such as these, were the forward Men to bring good Men into Trouble, and were sooner heard than better Men, till they became discovered.

It is clear, that Nonconformity was not the only Cause of our Breaches and Miseries, but a Spirit of Division from God, and Disaffection to his Servants, and Peace with Godliness.

Mr. *Bennet*, of *Whitwick*, in *Leicestershire*, gives this Account under his hand, among many other Troubles: These came Letters from the Duke of *N. C.* relating a Plot in *Tyrkshire*, to the Deputy-Lieutenants in *Leicestershire*, who upon the Lord — and other Deputies, sent the Constable

to fetch Mr. B. before them, and told him, they conceived it necessary to secure him, as suspected of this Plot. He told them, His Lordship was the first Man he heard speak of the Plot, and being Treason, I must, said he, and I will reveal it; I know nothing but what I have from you, and I must make it known. His Lordship drew out Letters and Papers, which he said were from the D. of N. and other Lords, to show him; but he said, he would see no Papers which did concern any Plot. The next day he went to the Earl of *Stamford*, and discovered what he heard from the Lord —, who discovered it to other Deputy-Lieutenants; and so Mr. Bennet escaped that Snare.

Upon such Informations (against the Ejected Party) it is like, the King and Council sent down Letters, to demand Security of the Peace from such Persons as they suspected. Upon which pretence, Mr. Bennet was, with other Ministers, taken, and clapt in Prison at *Leicester*; but they were after a Time released. Among whom was Dr. Hen. of *Magdalen-Hall* in *Oxon*, a Person of that great Openness and of Heart, that no Man can believe him a Party in any ill Design; when the rest were released, he was detained a while, upon pretence of keeping a Conventicle with his Fellow-Prisoners, to whom he preached one Lord's-Day in the Prison.

After the Act of Uniformity took place, it is impossible to relate the Number of their Sufferings, and great Trials, with Hardships upon their Persons, Estates, and Families, by uncomfortable Separations, Dispersions, Unsettlement and Removes, Disgraces, Reproaches, Imprisonments, chargeable Journeys, Expences in Law, tedious Sickneses, and incurable Diseases, ending in Death; great Disquietments and Frights to their Wives and Families, and their doleful Effects upon them; and in all Conditions, various Appearances of Divine Providence, great Supports, various Deliverances, and strong Resolutions, with a clear satisfaction of Conscience, as to the Cause of their Sufferings, are impartially to be observed.

How various are the degrees of Light, and the Dictates of Conscience, even in good, wise, and self-searching Men; and that even in a division of Judgment and Practice! The first Cause is, different degrees of Light, and means of attaining Knowledge. Some are more deep and quick, searching and industrious, have better means and opportunities of knowing: Some can take in a greater Latitude of Circumstances, and can compare Circumstances, and the Things themselves, and judge of the Good and Evil. I do not now take notice of the Biases of Education, Prejudices, Prepossessions, and Passions of Men, nor the Influence of the World upon

Men

Mens Alterations. And the true Reason of Resolution and Peace, which Men have in these different ways, is their Sincerity, and strict Observance of their own Light and Judgment, and the Purity of their Motives.

And from hence arises a Necessity, of performing several Duties, such as, Let us not judge one another, but forbear one another. In Love, but bids humbly acknowledg the Imperfection of our own Understandings. We have not all Knowledge, we know not other Mens Reasons, Thoughts, and Hearts. We should amicably confer when we meet, and hold our Candle to show them the Way, (when we think theirs is out, this is to be understood of doubtful Things, and not clear Scriptural Matters of Faith and Worship.) It should teach us Long-suffering, and to mortify our Passions, and tie up our Tongues and Hands from Persecution. Better my Hand be cut off, than that I stretch it out to strike any Man that is approved of God, for such Things wherein he approves himself unto him.

Let us take our Divisions to Heart, and think the Sufferings of our Brethren in this Life sufficient, and to touch, and spare to condemn them, as Hypocrites, and evil Workers. There are some Conformists within my knowledge, that I am confident would never have conformed, unless they had thought it had been their Duty, and they have Peace therein. They were not drawn in by Presumptions, nor driven in by Necessity.

There are and have been Nonconformists, that are as clear in their Nonconformity.

I was well acquainted with one, and I never was acquainted with a more loyal, sincere, holy Man. After many Disgraces, and sharp Trials, especially a generous gentle Spirit, in England, he went beyond Sea, against a terrible Stormy Sea, which broke into the Ship, he asked his own Soul, If he could die in and for that Cause of his Sufferings, and leaving his Native Country, to preach in a strange Land. His Conscience gave him a plain and full Answer, when ready, as he thought, to leave his Body and dear Relations in a deep Sleep. After his Return, he told me this and other Passages, with a most sincere Profession, That he had nothing to do in this World but to serve Christ, nor any thing to seek but Christ, with whom I believe he is, and with him will appear, as one that shall judge the World.

Did that eminently learned and excellent Mr. Joseph Allen, in or after his many Imprisonments, terrible Convulsions, and daily Self-examinations, recoil from his Reasons for Nonconformity? He was certainly so clear and resolved in this, that to his last Conflict with the Devil, three hours before his Death, Satan did not attempt him there; but this is re-

G

membered

numbered of him, — *I can not so be longer in this (dirty) World, than under my Master hath doing or suffering Work for me; more than does, forever in Earth.* Pag. 90. of his Life.

It was thought he would conform, till he saw what Assent and Consent was required. Another worthy Person, Mr. Joseph Baker of Worcester, did read the Service, but went out, and on his Death-Bed said, He could have done any thing but sin.

Take a fourth Testimony, that able Scholar and Minister, Mr. John Thompson, on his Death-Bed, in a Chamber over a nasty Psiry, (which was conceived to annoy him, into a Fever) in the Common-Goal at Bristol, told his Friends that were about him; *As for my Bonds, I bless God for them; and if I had known when I came in, that I should die here, I would have done no otherwise than I have done.*

Many more such Professions of Satisfaction might be gathered, but I must not be tedious. Neither were these the confident Sayings of fanciful Men, but rational. The first of these four debated the Case with one of the greatest Bishops in this Age; and was most satisfied in his Reason, since he discoursed the Points. And the last offered to dispute the Case with the Bishop, and others that stood by, with this Caution, *Tale Legem, & fiat Certamen;* which was most disingenuously construed by some of them thus, That he would have the Laws removed, and fight it over again; as it is in the Reply to the Bristol Narrative, printed, *Ann. 1654.* And no less preparation of Mind could carry them through all kinds of Afflictions and Sufferings, except Exile, and the Ax, or a more ignominious Death.

The Right Reverend Bishop of Cork can hardly believe the Brethren to be so poor as they are said to be. But can they chuse but be poor? If you consider their Number, their Charge, their small Tinct of enjoying their Livings, the small Number of the rich and wealthy that do own them, so far as to be their Patrons or Benefactors; the great Losses of their best Friends by the Fire of London, Decay of Trade; and, besides the long Taxes that lay upon them in common with others, many of them have been great Sufferers in their own Estates: Some Congregations having enough to do to afford a small Maintenance to their own Ministers; and having many occasions to exhaust them, to help them out of Prisons, to maintain them in Prisons, and many other ways constant Expence and Charge. Besides these Considerations, a few Arguments are convincing. I read in the Life of that Gentlewoman, of a great Mind and Contrivance, Mrs. Baxter, what his present Circumstances were, and what seduced him into them. How frugal and parsimonious that wife and good Man, Mr. Ja. Corbet, was, that he might have re-communicate

to them that were in want! And the good Sum of Money which that great Example and Trustee of Charity, *Mr. The Gorge*, hath given out of his own Purse, to some good Men in exigence; besides some private Collections, which have been made for some good Men, of deserved Notes. Twenty or forty Pound is a good Collection; but alas! how little a way will it go! how soon spent in a Family! and such Collections must not come often about. The Reverend *Mr. B.* tells us, his Wife engaged to procure a Man of Note 20 l. but it fell so short, that she, to make good her charitable Undertaking, paid 12 l. out of her own Purse. These are next to Demonstrations. And I doubt not, but *Mr. Baxter* can name the Men, that live upon little more than brown Bread and Water. I have heard of some in *Cumberland*, that have but eight or ten Pounds *per an.* to keep a Family; so that a piece of Flesh hath not come to one of their Tables in six Weeks time; their Allowance could scarce afford them Bread and Cheese. One of them went to Plow six days, and preached the Lord's Day. And *Mr. O. W.* in the West Country, was forced to cut Tobacco for his Livelihood. Those Justices of Peace, that have for many Years been zealous in that part of their Office, know the Poverty of the Preachers, by their issuing out Warrants upon some of the Hearers, because of the Poverty of the Preachers. Out of respect to the Worth and Modesty of some of them, I forbear their Names.

Those two worthy Brethren, and Fellow-Labourers, *Mr. Reynolds*, and *Mr. Whitlock*, of Nottingham, in *Octob. 1662*, removed out of the Vicarage-House, where they and their Families lived together, as they have always done, and went to *Colwick Hall*, which proved very unhealthful to most in both their Families; were (*Septemb. 1663.*) both seized at their Meeting, and brought to Nottingham by Souldiers, and with others indicted at the Assizes, where they came off, paying a small Fine. *August 10, 1665*, at seven of the Clock in the Morning, being Lord's Day, one of the Deputy-Lieutenants sent three Souldiers to seize them, who brought them to Nottingham, where, by an Order, (nothing being said to them,) they were sent to the Marshal's, where they were detained Prisoners, no Charge given against them, nor ever called to appear, till *Octob. 13.* following, at which time they were by the D. Lieutenants set at Liberty, giving Bond to appear at six days warning, at any time before next Assizes; but they never heard more of them.

It was thought that Imprisonment (on the Five-Mile Act) was the Cause of a fifteen Weeks Sickness to *Mr. Reynolds*. Before he was recovered out of it, they were constrained to remove their Dwellings, *March 25, 1666.* and for three months were constrained to live from their

Families, before they could meet with a convenient Dwelling, which was fifteen or sixteen Miles distant from Nottingham. They preached in the Night, and early in the Morning, out of publick Time, and yet were indicted twice for Conventicles, were often threatened, and once Mr. Reynolds was seized, the Officers breaking open the Door by force, who brought him before the Mayor, and would have indicted him upon the Five-Mile Act: But he was dismissed, making it to appear, he was upon his Journey to Cambridge.

Mr. Joseph Truman, (well known by several well-studied Treatises in Divinity) was often indicted, and once tried at an Oulawry, which was very chargeable to him.

A brief Narrative of the Sufferings and Imprisonment of Mr. Francis Bamfield, Minister of Sherburn in Dorsetshire.

The Town of Sherburn, by long and earnest Solicitations, obtained Mr. Bamfield to succeed the loyal and reverend, very pious Divine, Mr. Will. Leyford, moved thither by the experience and knowledge of his Loyalty, (in a constant asserting the Royal Cause in all Changes, and suffering for it) as of his eminent Abilities. Being utterly unsatisfied in his Conscience with the Conditions of Conformity, he took his leave of his sorrowful and weeping Congregation, the Lord's Day before St. Bartholomew, 1662. In a short time after he removed to another House in Town, Septemb. 10. following. As he was, after his wonted manner, before he came to Sherburn, in Family-Duty, and Exercise upon 1 Thess. 5. 6, 7. (whence he observed, That way which the Devil and his Instruments hinder Grace, God will wisely over-rule to further it,) and divers of his Neighbours with him, silent upon the Duty, one S. with other soundly re- quised him in the King's Name to be silent, and with the rest to depart the Room. This S. was neither of a sober nor bashful Temper, but separated for such a Service, yet could not utter his Command without much consternation, speaking a Word in a Breath.

Before this, two Deputy-Lieutenants had been consulted, to know if such an Exercise as Mr. Bamfield used were contrary to Law, but without any Answer from them, one T. an Apothecary, came with S. and said he had a Warrant from the Deputy-Lieutenants, to seize upon Mr. Bamfield, and Mr. Philips, his Assistant, (a very worthy Preacher) and ten more of the chiefest of his Auditors then present, and thereupon took these two worthy Ministers, and above twenty five more, to Prison, in the House of the Provost Marshall, where they all continued Prisoners till Wednesday Night following, separating the Preachers from the People.

In this Prison, there were two of this Company, whereof one was very old; had but one Room to them all, and but one Bed in it, for five Days and Nights. But the Prisoners turned their Prison Chamber into a Chappel, and spent their Time like an holy Priesthood, in praying, repeating Sermons, and singing Psalms. Saturday, about seven or eight of the Clock, Leave being obtained, the Prisoners came together, (I suppose by that time they had more Rooms allowed them) and while one of them was in Prayer, the Souldiers brake into the Room, and spake aloud, calling him *Rogue*, and bidding him make an end; laid hands upon him, and forced the rest of the Prisoners away. On the Lord's Day, after one denial, Mr. Bamfield had leave to preach to the Prisoners. Many of the Town desired to be present, and some obtained leave of the Souldiers, (paying a Fee of Entrance) to go in; but were thrust out again after they had paid their Money. Some got into Backside, and heard; and were threatned with Writts for the Trespass, by the Owner of it, whose Wife gave them leave; and Satisfaction of ten times the value was offered him for the Trespass.

One Evening the Souldiers would needs shew some Devotion, and when he that read the Service, came to *Lighten Mr. Darknes*, one of them, thinking it had been a Psalm, set up a Tune to sing; so unskilful were these Men in the Form of their own Devotion, being better at hindring others, than performing themselves the Worship of God. The Lord's Day at Night, the Ministers and Prisoners had leave to come together, and Mr. Philips to preach; but whilst he was in Prayer before Sermon, the Souldiers came violently in, and took away his Chair, and disturbed the Exercise; and so they had no Sermon. Upon Wednesday following, four or five of the Deputy-Lieutenants met, and called Mr. Bamfield before them first, then Mr. Philips, and afterwards the rest of the Prisoners. Sir J. S. of Par. was in the Chair, (who could come into Contest with Mr. Bamfield in point of Loyalty, in trying Times, it seems;) Mr. Bamfield owned he was worshipping God in his Family, his Doors open, and that divers of his Neighbours came in, Many were the Mischiefs imputed to their hearing and withdrawing, the not one thing was charged to be in the Prayer or Preaching, tending to Sedition, or otherwise peccant; however, cause or no cause, the Chairman declared the Exercise did tend to Sedition, and required Sureties for the Good Behaviour, and Appearance at the next Assizes, which he did; And the same was required, and given by Mr. Philips, and the rest of the Prisoners.

While

While they were in Prison, others that brought Provisions for their Friends, were not permitted: Some who came to visit their Friends in Prison, were imprisoned with them: Some had the Provisions taken from them; and the Souldiers made merry with it. Some were lain to carry Meat in their Hat-Crowns, that it might not be taken. Some were violently handled, and kicked down Stairs.

Some of the Prisoners had been Souldiers for the King in the Wars. A Thousand Pounds Security was offered for one of them, who had been a Souldier for the King, that he might go home to his Wife, who lay in at his House, a little way from the Marshal's House. The Sister of another, (a Souldier for the King in the Wars) was violently used; and the Victuals carried for her Brother, was taken from her.

The Prisoners paid double Fees, to the Justices Clerks for Recognizances, and to the Provost-Marshal, the same Gentlemen being both Deputy-Lieutenants and Justices: They paid for the Souldiers Attendance to guard them; that is, to disturb them, and abuse their Friends, as you heard before.

Mr. *Jehona Kirby*, Preacher of the Lecture at *Walsfield*, founded by the Lady *Cambden*, (90 l. per an.) seized there by the Company of Mercers, *London*, was ejected, 1660. but continued preaching in his own House, on the Lecture-Day, till a Lecture was seized in publick. After the Lecture was supplied, he was wont to preach in his own House on the Lord's Day Evening, after his hearing in the Parish-Church, except when he was hindered, to avoid Warrants, and Writs, *De Excommunication. cap.* or Imprisonment. In the latter end of 1665, he was forced by the five Mile Act to leave his House and Family, and travel abroad, to his great Inconvenience and Trouble, and of his Family, till he took a License from his Majesty to preach, 1672.

He was once committed for Neglect, Contempts, rebellious and insolent Disobedience to the Laws, (in preaching in his own House, which is not contrary to that Act of Uniformity, upon which they proceeded with him,) for three Months, *Novemb. 21. 1662*, by five Justices of the Peace. But to avoid this, he travelled abroad, till the *Minimus* was out of date. *Feb. 20. following, 1662*, another *Minimus* is made, to carry him to the Common-Goal at *Tork*, during three Months. He was taken, and sent accordingly, and remained a close Prisoner, never going out of the said Goal, paying 10 s. a Week for Chamber and Diet, as the Goaler testified.

August

August 26, 1664, after the Conventicle-Act came out, being the Lord's Day, as he was coming from Church, he was taken by the Bayliff of Wakefield, and was not permitted to go to Church in the Afternoon; and after two or three Nights stay at his House, was again sent to the Goal in York-Castle, for three Months.

After his coming home from York, other Warrants were prepared for him, in which are these Words:

Whereas, &c. divers Sectaries, and disloyal Persons, as we are informed, to the Terror of the King's Liege People, do notoriously, impudently, and seditiously meet in the House of the said J. K. a Schismatical Nonconformist, under colour and pretence of Religious Exercise, in other manner than is allowed by the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of England. — The said J. K. doth traduce and revile the King, and the Church, — disturb the Peace, and turmoill the Nation in new Combinations and Confusions, &c. —

This Mr. Jos. Kirby did constantly frequent the Church, whilst he was permitted, preached with least Offence, and avoided all appearance of Opposition; and, in the Time of the Usurpation, was a constant and loyal Assertor of the Royal Interest, insomuch that he suffered for his Forwardness therein: But Preaching in other manner than is allowed by the Liturgy and Practice, (what are those kinds of Religious Exercise, that are disallowed by the Liturgy?) is a Crime, that hath Blackness enough in it to deface his Loyalty.

It is remarkable, he was sent by another *Minimus* to Goal to York-Castle; but they who made it, were so exact and careful as to mis-date it, and to make the Time of going in, to be the Time of his coming out; and the Goaler observing it, refused to receive him, and so he escaped that time. But the Constable that went with him, with that wise *Minimus*, was so civil and courteous to him, that he desired him, that he would be pleased to take his Lodging there, till he should go back to Wakefield for another *Minimus*. What an officious Officer was this, to be willing to take the pains to fetch another *Minimus*, asking nothing of Mr. Kirby, but to bear his Charges? I am much taken with the Kindness of this honest Constable, that would save Mr. Kirby a Journey himself, to fetch a better *Minimus*.

To send Ministers to the Common-Goal, is not much to their Honour; but to send any to the House of Correction, is to send them whither Gentlemen are seldom sent, I think. But to shew how Nonconformists have been honoured, I shall produce a Piece of a Copy of a *Minimus* made to send a Minister to the House of Correction, I will conceal his Name, except I had his Leave, in honour to him.

Burgess

Burgus de Leeds.

To the Master of the House of Correction.

WE herewithall send you the Body of — who stands accused before us, for that he and others, above the Number of five Persons, and above the Age of sixteen Years, did depart from the Places of their several Habitations, and upon Jan. 21: instant, in the Night-time Assemble, under presence of joining in Religious Worship. — And refusing to give their Recognizances, with Sureties, to answer the Premises, and to be of Good-Behaviour. — These are therefore to will and command you, That the Body of — you receive, and him in your safe Custody keep, until he shall enter into Recognizance, &c. till the next General Sessions, &c.

Here was indeed a Warrant (such as it was.) But another Minister, (whose Name I conceal, to avoid Offence, and for Shame) was at Noon-day, by oral Command of a L. put in the Town-Stocks, in his own Parish, to the great Grief and Trouble of his People, (whose Minister he had been thirteen Years, elected by them, and presented by the lawful Patron to his Living) where he continued for the space of two Hours.

Anno 1669, Mr. O. Heywood, Minister of Caley, near Halifax, was desired to preach near Leeds, on those Words, *Walk worthy of God.* But the Mayor of Leeds, (whose Name I will not publish, because he repented of his Rashness and Incivility) hearing of it, sent Officers to disturb the Meeting, who did it effectually, with rudeness, who brought him to the Mayor, who treated him like a Fury, holding up his hand as tho he would strike him, and speaking Language unfit from a Magistrate to a Minister, and threatening to prosecute him to the uttermost, saying, *Have not you been once in our Hands already?* No, Sir, (said Mr. H.) I never was in Prison, but once for the King, in Sir George Booth's Rising. *The more shame for you now,* quoth Mr. Mayor, *cannot you read, Fear God, and honour the King?* In short, he was carried away with Lanthorns to the Common-Goals, called *Capsn-Hall*, and there put into a Room like a Swine-Sty, having nothing in it but Heaps of Straw. But the Goaler was so civil, as to have his Lodging cleaned, and fresh Straw brought for him, and to suffer a Bed to be brought in for him by his Friends; and leaving him some Conveniences, but disarming him of his Knife, he

courteously

courteously left him to his Rest, which was disturbed by Dogs and Cats fighting in the Room below him, &c. Next day Mr. Mayor sent for him, would have had him given Bond for the Behaviour, and fell into another perplexity, distracted between his own Spirit, and the Spirit of them that made him their Instrument, saying, What shall I do? I am put in this place; I would do for the best, and would willingly dismiss Mr. H. but I fear I shall be called into question for it, and brought into danger for it. But some wise Men and Friends promised to interpose between him and Danger, and so he became exceeding courteous to Mr. H. freely dismissed him, telling him, it was pity the Church should lose his Gifts, and other kind Discourse. — But he and thirty six were fined at the next Sessions, and himself put into the Ecclesiastical Court for the same Fault.

Mr. R. Smith, Minister of *VVb. S. in Somerset*, to which he had a legal Title, was forced out by the Violence and Power of a Popish Family, in April, 1662, (before the Act of Uniformity came out): Thence he removed to *Dynnington*, where he had some Estate of his own: whence he was constrained, for Peace and Quietness, to remove to *Chard*, to be out of the way of one who had informed, that he had been inciting the People to Rebellion, when in truth he was two days abroad, as a Physician to divers Families, and the Forger of the Information let it fall. When the *Oxford Act* came out, in his Circumstances he could remove no whither but to his Estate at *Dynnington*, where he had not been many Months, but his former Enemy, and some Confederates, wrought him great Troubles, of which one was a Prosecution in the Ecclesiastical Court at *VVells*. He was a fourth time constrained to remove, and not only to leave, but to sell his Estate, and to avoid Troubles, to remove into the remote Parts of *Devon*.

Mr. Fox, Rector of *D. B. in Stafford-shire*, after August 24. was put upon a new Way to maintain his Wife, and five small Children; and upon the Advice of Friends, he was encouraged to settle in a Corporation near to him, where by his Pen, and help of Relations, he had a comfortable Livelihood, until the *Oxford Act*, which forced him to remove, and to rent a Farm in *Derby-shire*.

Mr. Chantry, Minister of *VVeeford* in the same County, was necessitated, by the same Act of Corporations, to remove with his Wife and four Children into another Country, to take a Farm upon a Rack-Rent. His Family increasing, he could not afford to keep either Man or Maid, but was forced

H

to

to labour hard, and fare hard, and with Labour and Thrift could not pay his Rent, but ran in Debt, to his great Trouble and Affliction; yet lives upon it still, having eight Children.

Mr. Maynard, an aged Minister, of North-Taunton in Devon, was carried before one Justice G. (without any respect to Age or Episcopal Ordination.) Mr. Maynard was threatened to be sent to the Work-House, where (said the Justice) you shall hear better Preaching; and further, *You, Maynard, who made you a Preacher?* He replied, he was of old, Episcopally ordained: To whom the Justice answeren, *I hear you teach Children to suck in Rebellion; you ought to be banished the Realm, and if you return, to be cut asunder.*

This same Justice is suspected to be Popish, by his Words at Cholmleigh, at a Privy-Scissions, declaring, *The Nonconformists deserved to be executed, as well, if not better, than the Traiterous Jesuits that were executed at Tyburn.*

Two Ministers licensed by the King, were informed against for preaching in Licensed Places, and were brought before the Justice at the Bell in Cholmleigh, who adjourned to the Church-Yard, where he charged them with the Breach of the Statute of 22 of Car. 2. The Ministers pleaded, there was no Proof, that the Religious Exercises were in other manner than according to the Liturgy: It is no matter, said he, for the Law forbids the assembling of more than the Family. They pleaded their Licenses from the Secretary of State. After about two hours pleading in the open Air, to the hazard of their Healths, (bare-headed, 'tis supposed) he fined the Preachers 20 L. apiece, the House 40 L. for two Meetings; and said to one of the Preachers, pleading the King's Declaration, *What do you tell me of a whimsical Declaration?* And the other Preacher tendering him his License, he refused to look upon it, and said, *It may be an old Almanack for any thing I know.*

Mr. Henry Root, Minister at Sowerby, near Halifax, was forcibly taken out of his own House, 1663, by virtue of a *Mittimus*, upon a *Significavit* by three Bayliffs, who broke the inner Door of a Room where he was, hurrying him faster than his Old Age could bear, nor suffering him to take as much as a Coat, nor a Staff, nor Money in his Purse, nor to receive the Salutations of his Daughter-in-Law, who ran into the way to meet him, nor to ride upon a Horse, which another Reverend Minister that rode, and overtook him on foot, lent him to ride upon, without leading the Horse by the Bridle; So he alighted, and went on foot to Halifax, and thence to York-Castle, Prisoner for three Months. After a time, he was again sent Prisoner to the same Place for six Months; but the Justices under-
standing

standing that the Commitment was contrary to Law, he was at three Months end discharged. Yet a third time he was sent to *York Castle*, by Sir *J. A.* shewing no Cause, till further Order, where he continued Prisoner, close shut up in a little Room, and not so much as his Wife permitted to come to him, no, not so near him as into the Castle, to know if he were sick or well, alive or dead, till his Son by some means procured Liberty for his Mother to see his Father, but was not permitted to take part of his Lodging with him: And at length a Favour was procured for him, to be removed out of the Castle into the City. Between both Places he continued near a whole Year. Here's a long Imprisonment; but you shall hear of more Troubles upon his Son.

Mr. *Timothy Root*, Minister of *Sowerby-Bridg Chappel*, in *York-shire*, for preaching after *August 24. 1662*, till he was satisfied to conform, or the Congregation provided for, was by Sir *J. A.* and Mr. *C.* sent to *York Castle*, (his Wife lying in of her first Child) for three Months. In 1666, he was sent to Goal again, for no matter of Fact, till further Order. At which time the D. of *T.* came to *York*, and it was said, he would discharge him, and many others; but he did not. Shortly after the Duke of *Buckingham* came to *York*, and finding no matter of Fact against any of them, discharged them, upon Bond for the Good-Behaviour.

When the Five-Mile Act came forth, Mr. *Root* was forced to leave his Habitation and Family, and Farm which he had taken, to his great Loss, and his Wife ready to lie in, and to abide at his Father-in-Law's, whither also his Wife and Family came, when she could go abroad, and there continued, till going to *Lancashire*, to visit some Relations, he was indicted by a Doctor, who disturb'd him as he was preaching in a Chappel, upon the desire of his Friends: But the Doctor mistook his Name, and so he escaped. And the Persons indicted with him did traverse the Indictment, and coming before Judge *Littleton* at *Lancaster*, the Judge worthily declared, *If we made publick Places, where the Bell was tolled, to be riotous Assemblies, they would presently cause all People to turn Papists.* Some five Months after Mr. *R.* was invited to preach at the same Chappel, being vacant, for which he was indicted again for a Riot, which proved chargeable to him. *August 1670.* he was desired by some Friends at *Leeds*, to preach at *Stadwell Chappel* one Lord's Day, the Place being destitute. Whilst the Congregation was singing a Psalm, came the Lord S. of H. Mr. *C. &c.* and twenty four Troopers, with some Bayliffs; he was drawn out of the Pulpit, into the Chappel-Yard, where he was afraid of his Life, because of the trampling of their Horses, (and now also his Wife lay in of a fourth Child.) He cried to them to keep off their Horses; he was in their

H 2

hands,

hands, and they in God's: *In God's hands*, said the Lord, *no, thou art in the Devil's hands*. His Pockets were searched, and a Receipt was found, which had his Name in it; which he confessing, they make a *Mistake*, to carry him to York Goal, where he was kept up close Prisoner in a Chamber, whither the Under-Goaler came, and told him, Except he would give them 20 *l.* he should be loaden with double Irons, and cast into the Low Goal, among the Thieves. He put them off as well as he could without Money; but after fourteen Days Confinement to his Chamber, he was brought forth, and double Irons were laid upon him, heavier than any of the Thieves, whose Co-prisoner he was like to be. The Goaler locked the inner Door in the Day-time, and would not permit him the Liberty of the Thieves, to walk in the Castle-Yard, to take the Air; nor a Bedstead to be set up; but he laid a Bed, which he got, upon Straw. On the Lord's Day following he would have preached to the Thieves, and other Prisoners, standing only at the Holes where the Prisoners begged; But whilst he was at Prayer, the Under-Goaler came with a Command from the Head-Goaler, for him to desist. But when he had thus lain about four or five Days and Nights, two Justices in the West, Capt. B. and Mr. T. sent a Certificate for him to Mr. C. upon which he was released, yet not without being bound to appear at the next Assizes at York; where waiting all the Time of the Assizes, and nothing coming in against him, he was finally discharged from that Trouble, which was very chargeable to his Purse, hazardous to his Wife, vexatious to his Friends, and ignominious in a high degree. He was four times indicted in several Places, and put to very great Charges of Journeys, Traverses, *Certiorari's*, Fees, and Removes: He was thrice thrown into the Common-Goal at York, and once laid in double Irons, close shut up; not favoured to lie like a Man upon a borrowed Bed; not permitted on a Lord's Day to preach to the Prisoners: And all this for preaching, neither Sedition nor Heresy, upon Invitation, and where there was great need.

Mr. Nathan Heywood, of Ormskirk, in the County of Lancaster, was wont to go frequently to hear the Service on the Week-Days; and for all that, a strict Command was sent to him, (by Warrant sent to the Churchwarden) and to two Gentlewomen, both Protestants, and to them alone, to come to Church-Service, or else they should be proceeded against upon the Acts of Q. *Eliz.* and K. *James*. He pleaded, that he had the King's Licence to preach at Chappels. The Justice not satisfied with this, sent out his Warrants for Twelve-pence a Sunday, altho he saw Mr. Heywood present at Common-Prayer, upon occasion of a Funeral. The next day after he recalled his Warrants, turning it into Jest, as if he intended only
the

the Quakers, but blotted out the Names of two notable Papists, presented to him.

Jan. 4. 1673, the Justice himself intended to break up the Assembly at *Scarsbrick* Chappel, but was discovered, being ciossed and hindered in his coming, by notable Providences, and being discovered, Mr. H. forbore Preaching. When the Justice came, finding himself disappointed, he was in a great Rage, and drove the People out of the Chappel Yard and Chappel, and bad them depart; and in his way home again, he called upon a Constable (a Papist) charging him to go to the Chappel, and keep possession of it till four of the Clock; which the Constable did, taking other Papists to his Help, who all made merry in the Chappel, and smoaked Tobacco, and kept out Protestants from the Worship of God.

Jan. 27. The Justice, in a Letter to a great Lady, whose Chappel it was, declared, That he intended to have been there himself, hearing the Liturgy would be read there; but being indisposed, he could not come, desiring her to do her self the Honour to break up the Meeting which was to be there: But she thought it a greater Honour to encourage Mr. H. to preach, and the People to hear. His Servant staid Sermon, as well as Service, and told his Master what was done, according to his Command; and said, to his displeasure, he never heard a better Sermon, and desired him to send him thither as often as he pleased.

A Lawyer, and a Parliament-Man, advised the Lady to have the Liturgy read in her Chappel, and the Justice could not touch them: Which was done, and for all that he sent out Warrants to levy the Fine upon the Hearers, and sent several times Officers to take Names; and March 8. sent a Threatning to Mr. *Heywood*, he would come and pull him out of the Pulpit by the Ears; and sent a Warrant to distrain Forty Pounds upon his Goods, for a second Offence. Mr. H. was appoinced to meet the Justice at *Liverpool*, but instead of a good Understanding, he grossly abused him, threatned to send him to Prison on the Five-Mile Act, and said openly, *The King had no Power to grant Licences to preach.* March 29. an Usher of *Holland* read Prayers that day, and soon after he began, the Constable and Overseers of *Scarsbrick* came to the Desk, clapt a Warrant on his Shoulder, and charged him to go with them to Justice E. who threatned him with a Prison, and under-hand bad him go home. The Justice continued to give disturbance to Mr. H. almost every Day, till December following; and upon Decemb. 19. sent out his Warrant upon the Five-Mile Act, because he dwelt within three Miles of *Ormskirk*, where he had been Minister. And on the Lord's Day, Decemb. 20. there came three Men (such as they were) from Sir R. B. and him, about eleven of the Clock, while Mr. H. was in his Prayer before Sermon, walking up and down

down while Prayer was ended: then *Rigby*, one of them, came up to the Pulpit, and said, *Sir, you are our Prisoner, come down, and go along with us.* Mr. H. desired them to forbear till he had preached, and then he would submit: but *Rigby* held his Pistol to Mr. H.'s Head; and said, *God damn'time, come down, Sirrah* *Prayer of this kind of* *for I will crack your Pate.* Mr. H. desired him to Reformer, *used more* *be more civil:* such Language was unfit for that Place. Then the Lady, who with her Children and Servants stood at the Pulpit-door, required him to shew his Warrant; and told him, She might keep a Chaplain; and if he had no Authority but Guns, she had Guns in the House too. He shewed a written Warrant, which was obeyed: And the next day, the old Lady Stanley, and two Deputy-Lieutenants, and several Gentlemen, came and appeared for Mr. H. His living within three Miles of his former Place, and preaching, being a Nonconformist, were urged against him: He defended himself with Argument, and it could not be proved, that he lived within three Miles: But the Thing insisted upon was, That he should promise to preach no more. Several Justices stood for him; and one told his Prosecutors, If Mr. H. were sent to Lancaster-Goal, he should be as comfortably maintained, and as honourably released, as ever Prisoner was. At which the Prosecutor went off the Bench in a Rage, and went home, and sent his Warrants to distrain for Twenty Pounds upon his Goods: The Doors were kept shut for half a Year, and the Officers were often chidden, (who alledged they had no Power to break open Doors) because they did not get in, when they saw his Children playing in the Streets daily. His Person was kept from Goal, and his Goods from Distress, but his Spirit could not be preserved from great Grief: for he was heard to say, a little before he died, *I think this turning out of our Licensed Places will cost Mr. Yates and me our Lives. O this goes heavily! Our casting out of our great Places, was not so much as casting us out of our little Places.*

I leave the considering Reader to his Observations, which are obvious; only we plainly see, to what use the Laws are applied, and by whom executed.

Here, as before, is to be seen the Inreverence which some Men expressed towards his Majesty's Power and Declaration; and to them I will add one more Instance of it: And because it was so notorious, as to be brought before the King and Council, I need not be so shy to relate it, neither do I produce it as an Evidence of Disloyalty to the King, which I will not impeach, nor of Zeal for the Laws, as of an Antipathy against some religious Things and Persons.

Mr.

Mr. Sam. Doughty had the King's License to preach in his own House, in *Ashby-de-la-Zouch*, was convicted by the Lord B. and Lord S. Forty Pounds were levied upon him, twenty Pounds for his House, and twenty Pounds for preaching in it. He made his Appeal to the Quarter-Sessions, pleaded his License from the King, that there was neither Sedition, nor Breach of Peace; but he found no Relief. Afterwards he complained to the King and Council; the Lords were sent for up to Council: The King was graciously pleased to give him his part, but he could never get it.

The Losses by Nonconformity were very great, as being the Loss of a settled Subsistence; but the Loss by the Five-Mile Act was far greater, in many respects, to the poor ejected Ministers, and their Families.

Mr. John Mott, Minister of *Kings-Bromley*, near *Litchfield*, was separated from his People, from whom good Preference, with the Urgency of Friends, could not allure him. After *St. Bartholomew* he took a Farm of Sixty Pounds *per an.* in the said Parish, on which he lived handfomly four Years, and was a good Tenant. But behold what a Crime it is to be a Nonconformist! He was threatned, and sued by a Gentleman in the Parish and one of his Landlords turned against him, saying, It was not fit a Rebel against the King should live so near the Church. And another of them, or the same, after he had made him a Promise to let him a Lease for sixteen Years, as soon as he returned from *London*, at *London* let the Estate to another, at the very same Rent; only he had a Watch in Earnest of the Bargain; which Bargain stood, and the new Tenant turned out Mr. Mott, and his Family, to his great Loss, and at once was forced to leave the Place where his Relations lived, himself was born, and had been a painful Minister. After this, he was accommodated with a part of his Wife's Mother's House in *Stafford*, where he lived in a very afflicted, troublesome Condition, frowned upon by the Magistrates, (regulated Magistrates could do no less) threatning him with a Prison, (for the bold Offence of living in a Corporation, when he could live no where else.) When his Wife was big with Child, (of her sixth) he was committed to the Marshal's hand; because he would not give in Bond, wherein he was required to renounce the Covenant, (no doubt that Bond was drawn by the Advice of Counsel learned in the Law, or rather did not the Arbitrary Spirit act in those Councils?) and further threatned to be sent to *Tisbury* Castle, to be safe there. But he was at about a Fortnight's end discharged, when Reason and good Nature advised together, only paying his Fees, and the Charges of the House. After this, the Corporation-Act came out; and what Malice without Law could not do before, this Law

Law gratified the Malice of them, that thought a Corporation could not be safe, whilst one Nonconformist was in it. He was then forced from his Wife and Children: came to them sometimes privately; and if for many Years he appeared openly. Information was presently given to the Magistrates, and he brought before the Mayor, and commanded to be gone, or stay in Prison. Once he was brought before the Deputy-Lieutenants; some told him (strange News) that he was in a Plot; but he was dismissed, upon his Promise of Appearance whenever required. So vigilant was the Eyes of some upon him, or severe was their Inspection, that he hardly durst attend the Funeral of his own Child, or stay to comfort his Wife under her Motherly Grief, occasioned by that Loss. These Troubles, and Cessation from his former Work and Business, did affect him into a Decay of Health, and Oppression of Spirits, that it hastened his Death, as is verily believed.

Mr. Tho. Bakewell, Rector of Rolleston, and afterwards Lecturer of Burton upon Trent, in the County of Stafford, was suspended by B. H. for preaching in his own House, and was taken by a Warrant, together with Mr. Ford, (an eminent Minister, as he is said to be) his then Auditor, and brought before Sir ——— who demanded Sureties for the Behaviour. Mr. B. asked, if Preaching was a Breach of the Behaviour? The Justice said, It was: Then said they both, We will give no Bond against Preaching. Upon which they were imprisoned ten Weeks, and released without any Imposition (of Bonds or Security.)

After the Oxford Act, he left his Wife and Family at Burton, and kept away for many Months, till he saw the Edg of his Adversaries abate, preaching and shifting from House to House. When the King's Declaration came out, he was invited to preach eight Miles off; and to keep himself from the Officers, that had Warrants against him and the People, they congregated in Lanes, and woody Places; But the Huntsmen sent their Dogs after them, from place to place, and took Names, and informed, and Distresses were made, for Persons, but not for the Common on which they met, not being known to be in any Parish.

It is observed, That all one Summer, which was wet, they were not wet with Rain, while they met, inasmuch that the Country-People said, They can have fair Weather to keep their Conventicles, when others could not get fair Weather to get in their Harvest. He was confined to his own House, as a Prisoner, not daring to go forth without great circumspection, for some Years; and by strange Providences, like *Athenasius*, escaped great Dangers, and narrow Searches.

Mr.

57
Mr. Tho. Jollie, Minister of Altham, upon his Ejection, broke up House, and with three small Children, was put to wander for a considerable time, without any certain Dwelling-Place. When he was a Sojourner at Healy, *Octob. 9. 1663.* he was seized upon by a Lieutenant, and three Souldiers, in a rude manner, was set on Horseback behind one of them, nor permitted to draw on his Boots, nor put on his Hat: These carried him to Burnley, and committed him to a Guard. He was examined about keeping Meetings, which could not be proved; but yet he must find Sureties for the Behaviour: and, as if that was too little, he must be sent out of his Country. When he was at Family-Duty, in a House to which he was committed by a Colonel, a Captain came in boisterously, pretending it was a Conventicle, and with some Words of Blasphemy, plucked the Bible out of his hand, and drew him to the Court of Guard, where he must sit all Night, insulted over, and was not suffered to lie down till towards Day, when he was permitted to lie on a little moist Straw. He was, contrary to the Order of a Justice of Peace, and without the Command of the Colonel, sent away on the Lord's Day, in extreme Rain, to Skippon in York-shire, and there lay under the Marshal's hand, till sent back, because the Officers there knew not to what purpose, or for what Cause he was committed.

Novemb. 4. 1663. he was taken Prisoner by three Troopers, not shewing him any Warrant or Order, and not telling him whither they would have him, but carried him to York, and put him under the Marshal's hand, who lodged him in a cold Room, without Fire, in the depth of Winter; and no Crime objected to him there: after a great Expence, and Hazard of his Life, he was sent home in Peace.

Feb. 12. 1664. he was taken at a Meeting by the same Captain; his Souldiers brake down the Doors by his Command. When the Captain came in among them, his Courage failed him, and his Countenance fell; so that he went away, and left Mr. J. to his Souldiers, one of whom (*W.*) raged against him in vile and bloody Expressions: Soon after which, he, and another Souldier were taken away by Death, in a terrible manner. He and others were carried before two Justices, who sent him to Lancaster Goal, where he continued the full Time appointed by the first Act against Conventicles.

After his Release, he was again (*Novemb. 23. 1665.*) seized, by Order from the Lord Lieutenant and Deputies, and by them turned over to the Justices, to give Bond for the Behavior, or to be sent to Goal; but Justice *Rigby* confessed it was without Precedent, and therefore sent him home, upon promise to surrender himself, if he sent for him within a Fortnight.

After the Five-Mile Act came out, he was separated from his Friends, and forced to leave his own Estate, and put to continual Night Travels, to enjoy Divine Ordinances, for many Years, by which he contracted Diseases, to the danger of his Life. Being upon a time taken Preaching, for which a Warrant of Banishment, for the third Offence, was sent out against him; but it miscarried, and he escaped.

April 25. 1669, he was taken by Captain — and his Man, who brought him before some Deputy-Lieutenants, who sent him to Lancaster Goal for six Months, for preaching within five Miles of *Altham*, where he had been Minister.

In October, he was sued for Forty Pound, upon the Five-Mile Act, by the said Captain N. which Suit cost Mr. J. about Eighty Pounds.

Decemb. 5. following, a Warrant of the Behaviour was served upon Mr. J. for (as he saith) fulfilling his Ministry, in feeding his Flock, according to his solemn Vow made at his Ordination.

About June 14. 1674, before he knew his License from the King was out, he was taken preaching in one of his licensed Places, by Captain N. who commanded him to come down, or he would pistol him, (holding his Pistol at him in the Pulpit) and swearing blasphemously, and calling him shamefully. After the Captain had detained him as a Prisoner, (being made a Justice) he sent forth a Warrant to distrain Twenty Pounds upon Mr. J.'s Goods; and because his Goods were removed out of the way, he sent out two Warrants, to distrain upon two of his Hearers; which Goods of theirs Mr. J. redeemed, because taken instead of his. Another Warrant was sent out for Twenty Pounds for the House. The whole of the Fines for that Meeting came to about Forty four Pounds, which was all imbezelled, without paying to the King his part, or giving to the Poor theirs, save only one Forty Shillings. The King did graciously remit to the Sufferers his part; but the Captain would not obey the Order of the Lord Treasurer: Yet this is for the King. The same is known to be true of a Justice in *Lancashire*.

About Novemb. 7. 1678. Mr. J. with several other Dissenting Protestants, were presented among the Plotting Papists. They made their Appearance, and desired their Business might be put off till the next Sessions, which the Justice granted, because the Parliament had the Case of Dissenters before them: Yet the Clerk of the Peace returned him and the rest into the Exchequer, thereby (as he saith) cheating them out of their Liberty of Traverse. This was chargeable to him, besides the Sequestration of two parts of his Estate, which he looked for, when he wrote the short Narrative of his great Sufferings.

There

N. B. Some have exposed some of the Nonconformists to Jealousy and Sufferings, as being confederate with Jesuits, or maintaining a Correspondency and Interest with them; but this Nonconformist found no such Friendship from that Party: For Mr. W. of Drusenbaugh, a great Papist in his Parish, charged his Steward, a Papist also, to shut him out of Lango Chappel, where he was Lord of the Soil. His Adversaries were great Intimates with the Popish Gentry, which are numerous in that County; and some of his Adversaries had been professed Papists a while before.

There are many very remarkable Instances of God's Providence towards him, and of the insatiable Malice of very ill Men against him; with the Divine Hand stretched out against several of his Persecutors.

Two Captains, Gentlemen, and an Ensign hindered him to preach, or commend his People to God, before August 24. 1662, after thirteen Years labouring among his People. He withdrew, and gave way to their Violence, leaving this Admonition with one of the Gentlemen: *This is not the way to turn the Wrath of God from your House, which hath long lain upon it, but to bring it on to the uttermost.* The Gentleman answered, *Be it so.*

Their Carriage towards Mr. Jollie was an Offence and great Grief to the Country.

One of the three Excluders of him died in the pursuit of his most debauched Practices, with unexpressible Horrors.

Soon after another of them, whom he had warned as before, died (having seen his Male Issue rooted out before) by his own hands, by a Relapse into excessive Drinking, after a little Recovery. His Disease apprehended him, as if he had been struck with a Rod upon his Arm.

Another (but not one of the three) violent Prosecutor died in great Poverty and Disgrace.

A younger Brother, and next Heir to the admonished Gentleman, was the Cause of Mr. J.'s Apprehension, April 25. 1669. who not being well, would needs have his Chamber-Window in A. H. opened to see Mr. J. carried by a Prisoner; but such an Air came in at the Window upon him, that he took cold, and soon after died, without any male Issue: And saith the good Man, *Lord grant the third Brother may take warning.*

Another Gentleman, that sent Mr. J. Prisoner to Lancaster, was shortly after made a Prisoner, and all his Estate in Lancaster seized upon for Debt.

One F. a Retainer to Capt. N. and an Instrument in the Prosecution, a drunken and debauched Fellow, after a Revelling-Bout at the Ab. in W. was taken or smitten with an insatiable Thirst, insomuch that two days after he lay down and drunk at the River, to quench his Thirst, upon which a Stitch took him, and killed him presently.

About the latter end of 1677, Mr. R. a Justice, met at a Privy-Sessions, at which one of the Justices asked, Who Mr. J. was? Another answered, He is a Minister! No, said Mr. R. *he is an Enemy of Christ, and a Traitor to the King.* Presently after (as some present are ready to testify) that Gentleman fell a trembling, could not hold his Pen to sign any Warrant, nor sit up, nor stay in the Place, but was necessitated to leave the Sessions, and never came more to the Bench, dying soon after, as a fearful Spectacle.

The same worthy Person concludes a short Sum of his Sufferings thus: *We might give an Account of the special band of God upon us for Good, all along, throughout all our Infirmities and Temptations; leading us by the hand, and upholding us, either signally saving us from, or strengthening us under our Troubles; filling us with Peace passing understanding, and Joy unspeakable, supplying our Wants every way, who are a very weak and poor People. — Yea, either convincing or changing our Adversaries or baffling and blasting their Designs. — All this for the everlasting Honour of his most glorious Name alone. Hallelujah.*

Compare the Spirit of the Prosecutors, and the Spirit of the Sufferers, the End of the one, and of the other, and then judge seriously, who is the best Christian, and who is most approved of Christ, they who serve him, or the other who trouble them for it.

Mr. T. M. of L. (I conceal his Name because of his Modesty) in beginning and ending his Letter at the Importunity of his Friend, thus he begins: *Honoured Sir, were it not for the false Reflections and Calumnies against the Nonconformist-Ministers of England, — your kind and serious, sympathizing, and seasonable Letter had not extorted these sad following Lines. — I am in some sort compelled to comply with your Importunity, in the ensuing epitomiz'd Narrative.* And he concludes with a Spirit that commands from me a great respect to his Christian and humble Temper.

He left his Living in the City of L. where he had been a Minister some Years, having a Wife and several Children, lost 80 l. per an. and 40 l. which should have been paid to him in the beginning of the Year, and in a low Estate left his Living: Yet he continued in Town, living upon mere Providence, till the Oxford Act came out: Then he was forced to leave Wife and Children, being scarce free from an almost deadly Cold, which he thought would put an end to his Life, continuing about three Months upon him. He saw not Wife nor Children after that in eleven Weeks, and durst not come to them publicly in eighteen Months, or thereabouts, and having no Dwelling-place abroad, journeyed in that time (as he thinks) thirteen score Miles on foot, from place to place. If at any time he should steal home by Night, he was in great fear and danger, and durst

durst not stir out of his Chamber; and whenever he went out again, he went either very late, or very early, and sometimes on a sudden, for fear of being taken. After that time he made bold to come home; but the Zeal of some growing so hot, that one Mr. Grace, an aged worthy Minister, coming to Town, they made search for him, which he escaped, leaving his Horse in his Inn, and escaping on foot: Then Mr. M. thought it unsafe for him to stay, and made haste away the next day, and durst not return in a long time. One time he was sent for to a Magistrate that lay sick, and continued his Night-Visits for a Fortnight; but the Evening before he died, he was sent for in haste by Day-light; and because he was sent to go to the Magistrate's House, he was complained of to the chief Magistrate of the Town, by a Curate, which made him hasten away next morning, (Saturday): The chief Magistrate was so kind as to send notice to his Wife, on the Evening of the Sabbath, that her Husband should be gone, for some had been twice with him for a Warrant. After this he absented long. He was cited into the Ecclesiastical Court, for baptizing his own Child. One time as he was going along the Street, one cried out to the Town-Clerk, who went after him, *Do you see the Rogue Mr. R. do you see the Rogue? He is before you:* But God was pleased to give the Town-Clerk another Heart than to apprehend him. But this made him be much from home, and walk the Streets very sparingly. He hath been forced into the Country in Snow and Rain, to preach before day, and to shift from House to House before day, for fear of a Magistrate in the Country, who hath said, he would have him dead or alive. And so not daring to be in the City, nor to appear in the Country, in that Magistrate's reach, he hath been constrained to retire into the Fields and Solitudes, to keep Sabbath all alone. He hath lived upon Providence for eighteen or nineteen Years; and tho' he hath been in danger of Life, by reason of Heats and Colds, yet hath he not been forsaken, nor his Seed begged their Bread, nor suffered as they did, who were destitute, tormented, afflicted, wandering up and down in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, Dens and Rocks, and Caves, &c. With many other pious Expressions of God's Goodness, and wonderful Providences, his own Unworthiness, as unworthy to be counted a Sufferer, he concludes to his worthy Friend with Praises and Prayer.

Having mentioned Mr. Grace of Sheerston, as an aged worthy Minister, I remember some short Account of him, which take as followeth.

Mr. Grace, upon his Ejectment from his Livings, on which he lived comfortably, was with his Wife and eleven Children reduced to Straits; Hoping to get some Supplies of Maintenance, he took a Farm of about

To his

Thirty Pounds per an. (But preaching in his own House was, it seems by his Letter, a Crime not to be passed by.) He was in a short time after his other Troubles, apprehended by two Justices, and, with many of his Hearers, bound over, which was very chargeable. Not long after, he was sent for by a Party of Horse, called out of his Bed, and carried Prisoner to Stafford, for what he knew not, nor was ever told. He being unable to bear the Charge of his Imprisonment, made application to the Deputy-Lieutenants, was forced to give in Bond of a hundred Pounds, to appear when called. He was dismissed, after many hard Speeches, but no Charge laid against him. After these Troubles, he was by the Five-Mile-Act necessitated to remove five Miles from the Corporation, to a Place where he lived at great Costs and Charges, separated from his dear Relations, and his Farm left to the management of Servants, which proved exceedingly to his Loss.

Some Nonconformists in the North of England have been often imprisoned. Eight were indicted for Roman-Catholicity, and their Estates sequestered: Their Proof and Plea, that they were true Protestants, both in the Country, and at London, cost them about Forty Pounds. They were indicted upon the Statute of Twenty Round a Month, and Twelve-pence a Sunday. Ten were prosecuted upon the Statute of 35 of Eliz. came to London, and were put in a way by a noble and powerful Lord, to get off: And had not Sir William Jones, then Attorney General, (whose Name is and will be in honour, while any honour will be paid to a professed and open Assertor of true Loyalty, Laws, and Religion) been so generous and merciful, as to cause but one Fee for ten; (that is, 30 l. instead of 210 l.) due at the several Offices, they had been great Sufferers, and their streight Condition had been reduced I cannot tell into what Streights and Poverty, they being no ways able to pay it; for even what was paid, was raised by the Charity of good People in London.

When will the Jesuits and Papists be at this pains and charge to prove themselves Protestants? Is this a Sign that Nonconformists are Papists, or in with them in a Confederacy?

If any Man that hath any value for the precious Souls of Men, for whom Christ died, and hath any knowledge of the miserable Condition of large and dark Places in those Counties, he may judg it to be a great Disservice to

to Jesus Christ, and immortal Souls, to silence, Imprison, and punish Preachers, and thereby to leave poor ignorant Souls to the Improvements of natural Ignorance, and to the Power of ill Examples, and irreligious or superstitious Customs. A Traveller, unacquainted with the Country, is not in greater danger in the Night, of falling into Cole-Pits and Precipices, than those poor Souls of falling into the Bottomless-Pit, if they are denied the Guidance of faithful Ministers. Shall poor Souls abide in Darkness, and err from the Ways of God, to their everlasting hazard? and Ministers, that have knowledge of their Danger, and a charitable Sense of their great Need, look on, and see them fall, and sin, and die, and not call, and warn, and exhort, and teach them? Their painful Ministers, to avoid Offence and Dangers, and to shew poor Souls the Way to everlasting Life, have gone under the protection and concealment of the Darkness of the Night, and preached and prayed in Caves and Pits, venturing their Healths and Lives, to save Sinners from everlasting Destruction.

One Mr. Davis in Cumberland preached in one of them, and got a Cold that proved mortal, leaving six Children to the Charity of good People, and particularly to the Care of Mr. Richard Wilson, a Gentleman of a small Estate, but of great Piety and Usefulness in the North, and one who had like to have been ruined on the 35 of Eliz.

And what a poor Reward is a Threatning, a Frown, a Fine, and an Imprisonment! Is this a Prophet's Reward! Not to receive them that speak Peace, into their Houses, is an Unkindness: To bid them depart out of their Coast, is a fairer dismissal than to send them to a Prison. If their Rewards be only in this Life, then of all Men, they who are punished in those and other dark and poor Corners of the Land, are most miserable.

Active and successful Mr. Tho. Tregosse writes thus to his Brother-Minister: *Warrants are granted for levying Two Hundred and Twenty Pounds upon me; yet God hath kept them off, but I am expecting daily to be stript of all: I am also threatned upon the Corporation-Law. — I am constantly expecting an Imprisonment.*

To avoid that Mischief, and others which he expected, some have removed often from Place to Place. It is not painful to ambitious Men, to remove from a worse to a better, from an old to a new Preferment; but Removes are chargeable and burthensom, from a Free-Hold to a Farm, to a Chamber, or a part of another Man's House, &c.

I hear, Mr. Stevens, of Fennie-Drayton in Leicester-shire, after his Ejection, removed seven times for his Peace.

Mrs.

Mr. Baxter, (*Lift of Mrs. M. B. p. 51.*) historically tells us of his several Removes, which must needs be very troublesome to his sickly Body, and to his Mind fixed upon Studies; and to have no better Accommodation, than a part of a very poor House of a Farmer's in *Totteridge*, where the Rooms smoak'd so extremely, as greatly annoyed the Health of the nobly charitable Mrs. Baxter. The Winter was very hard and cold; the Coal-smoak filled the Room in which they sat all day, so that it was as a Cloud, and they were even suffocated with the Stink. It was ill living without Fire in a cold Winter, and bad having Smoak in their Eyes, and Stink in their Nostrils: It was ill studying for him, in great pain besides; and ill living for her, whose Lungs could not bear Smoak and Closeness.

It doth as often affect me, as I call to mind what Reverend Mr. T. writes, in a Letter to a Relation. — *I am now septuagenarius, 'and hardly able to pass from one Chamber to another, without some help, over and above that of my Staff. Being driven out of my Place, worth above Two Hundred Pounds per An. with my Wife and eight Children, and by forced Confinements, and sometimes Banishments, for the space of a whole Year from my House and Family, did contract those Weaknesses and Distempers, under which I now languish. But still I have cause to bless God, who corrects me far less than I deserve; and why shall a living Man complain?*

Take another Instance of the Effects of Confinements upon the Health and Life of some more, and upon their Families.

The well-known Divine, Mr. G. Hughes of *Plimouth*, was summoned to appear by a Lieutenant of the Garrison, as from his Superior, and to bring his Son with him. An Officer, with two Files of Musquetiers, was commanded to convey Mr. H. to an Island in the Sea, not suffering his Son (to be his Companion and Comforter) to go with him, but confined him to *Plimouth*. While Mr. H. was in the Island, the Earl of B. came upon it; but Mr. H. could not obtain the Justice or Friendship to speak with him, tho' nothing was laid to his Charge. Here in his *Patmos* he answered Mr. *Serjeant's Sure-Footing*. And here that Disease, by the Saltiness of the Air, possessed him, that never left him: His Legs were black and swollen, and could not be recovered. After nine Months Imprisonment, he was offered his Liberty, upon condition of giving Security of a Thousand Pounds, not to live within Twenty Miles of *Plimouth*. He yielded to the Importunity of his Friends, who gave that Bond without his knowledg, to see if better Air would relieve him, and came in a languishing condition to take his leave of his Friends, and the Place of his Ministry, and removed to a Place twenty Miles off, and there died.

His

His Son Mr. O. was in no Charge or Employment, and was not liable to those Laws which were against such only, who were in Places; for all that he was imprisoned, and in Decemb. 1665, the Oath which is in the Oxford Act was offered him, (before that Act came out) he refusing it, was continued till March 30. following: At which time he was brought into the Fort, and required to sign and seal a Promise, not to remain in *Plimouth* forty eight hours after, nor to return thither, without leave from the E. of B. or his Deputy; upon promising so to do, he was dismissed.

Mr. Tho. Martin, Lecturer of St. Andrew *Plimouth*, 1661, (certainly so good and innocent a Man as I took him to be could not provoke any Man, much less Authority) was, upon a rigorous Interpretation of Words, suspended *ab Officio*; and one time it being given out, that he intended to preach, was threatned by a Man, who carried Anger in his Breast, and a Sword at his Side, to be pluck'd out of the Pulpit by the Ears.

Anno 1665, he, together with Mr. Hughes, Vicar of that Church, was sent to the Island, and kept Prisoner under very hard Circumstances, for ten Months, in which he, his desolate Wife, and eight Children, suffered much Discomfort, and his Estate a great Impairing. He humbly desired a Removal, when the Sicknes was among the Souldiers, and some of them very near his Lodging, which was denied. But at length, for the sake of Liberty from such a Restraint, by the Command of the E. of B. he gave Bond of a Thousand Pounds, and two Sureties to his Majesty, not to inhabit in, or to come within twenty Miles of *Plimouth*, without his or his Deputy's leave. He and his Family suffered great Disadvantages by their Separation from one another; and when his Presence was necessary to advise, relieve, and comfort his Family, in Sickneses, and Death of some, he durst not come any nearer to them. In all this time he was not accused of any Crime, or Breach of Law or Statute, and was never admitted to come before the E. of B. about this Business.

I shall not collect Stories out of what is published to the World, nor gather all which might be soon brought together; but I shall communicate one Story more, to shew them that knew not the Temper of the Times, and to what we may impute many of our Divisions and Miseries, something worth taking notice of.

After Mr. N. S. had spent divers Years in *Oxford*, and had been legally ordained by Episcopal Hands, he returned to P. the Place of his Nativity, of his Ancestor's Abode, where his Estate and his Relations lived, and betook to his private Studies.

Two Officers of the Garrison came from the Governour (as they said) to his Lodging, (*Octob. 6. 1665.*) and told him, the Governour desired to speak with him at the P. Tavern: Mr. S. hastned thither, where he found divers Ministers on the same Business. After they had been there a while, they perceived a Guard of Souldiers was put upon them. *Octob. 9.* Mr. S. with others, were removed to the Fl. Tavern. Mr. S. was rudely treated by the Serjeant, for offering to sleep to his Lodging without his leave. The Serjeant that Night doubled the Guard, and set two Sentinels at his Chamber, and the Liberty of the House was denied him. In the Evening he was conveyed with four Musquetiers, with their Matches lighted, to the Col. who conveyed him to St. Nicholas Island, with Orders from the E. not to converse with Mr. H. and Mr. M. Prisoners there, and to have a Sentinel set at his Chamber-Door, and not to go out of his Chamber without a Guard. He continued under this Restraint, till *Decemb. 4.* In *January* he was brought before the Earl, who told him, If he could satisfy the Bishop, he would be satisfied. The Bishop knowing him in *Oxford*, wrote a very obliging Letter to the Earl, as much in his favour as could be. The Oath in the *Oxford Act* was tendered him, which he refused, as not concerned in the Act it self, when the Act came forth, not then in being. His Prison was changed, and *March 30.* was released upon his Bond to depart the Town within forty eight hours.

Mr. *Worts*, (commended as a worthy Person, by a Gentleman able to judge) Pastor of a Congregation at *Gustwick* in *Norfolk*, was imprisoned by a Writ *De Excommuni. capiend.* taken out *Novemb. 15. 1664.* and continued in the Common-Goal till *Septemb. 3. 1665.* when the Plague was at the height in *London*, he was made close Prisoner until *Novemb. 9.* not knowing by whose Order, or for what additional Offence. *Feb. 2.* he, with six more, were put into the Castle, in a Hole in the Wall, over an Arch, on the West side of the Castle, which had neither Door, Window, nor Chimney. There was room in a Corner for one Trundle-Bed, the rest lay in Hammocks. The Hole had three Wickets into the Felon's Yard, one of which must be open Night and Day, lest they should have been stifled in the Night with the Steam of the Charcoal. For five Weeks the Door below (for the Hole is about forty Steps high, up a narrow Passage in the Wall) was kept lock'd Night and Day. The Keeper usually went away about four of the Clock with the Key to a Neighbour-Village, about a Mile and half distance from the Head-Goalers House, and returned not till about eight in the Morning, in whose absence none could come to them, whatever occasion might be. During those five Weeks, they were not permitted to set foot into the Yard. If a Prisoner's

Wife

Wife came to see him, he was called down to the Door, and the Keeper would set his Back against one side of the Door, and his Foot against the other, and so the Husband and Wife might only see and speak with each other. They had leave to run up and down Stairs as oft as they would, which was instead of a Walk or Gallery for the space of five Weeks. Their Maid was not allowed to come up with their Provision. After the five Weeks, these Persons were permitted to go into the Cattle-Yard, during the time of their continuance there, which was about two Months; then they were removed to another Prison. They were wonderfully preserved this Year from the Contagion, while the Arrows of the Almighty fell mortally very near them, an one side and another, there being only a Lane between, so that they could both hear and see some that were shut up, crying for Bread, and themselves shut up also, and could not flee, save only into their Strong-Tower, the Name of the Lord, where they found Safety and Peace. Some time after a great Man, then in Power, told the Goaler, he must carry them forthwith to the Castle, and put up each in a Place alone: The Goaler answered, *It cannot be done, the Castle is full, and I daily fear the Plague should break out amongst them*: He replied, *Then put them into a Place together*, adding, *What do I care if the Plague be in it*. Yet were they preserved in that nasty Hole, at whose Wickets came in the odious excrementitious Odors of the Common-Yard of the Felons. One of them was even suffocated by it; the Physician could not help, so long as the Patient was put up there: Upon which an Account was speedily sent to the Sheriff of his low Estate, with a Petition to remove him for a little time, his Life being in danger: The Sheriff answered, He durst not meddle, he must abide it: The Man revived notwithstanding, and lived.

Mr. *Wortz* continued Prisoner full seven Years, as the Gentleman remembers, from whom I have this Narrative, and who had it from Mr. *W.* while a Prisoner.

It is observed by the Reverend and intelligent Mr. *Baxter*, that many have been excommunicated in the Diocess of *Notwich*, (and there was a severe Prosecution of the Excommunicate); but to the honour of that most excellent Evangelical Bishop *Reynolds*, it is observed those Proceedings were not from him, who retained that good Spirit which he discovered, when he preached those and other composing and healing Sermons, before and upon the King's Restoration. The Guilt of this Severity and Inhumanity is imputed to Dr. *M. Chancellor* of the Diocess, with reflection upon his Greatness under the Usurpation; but the Chancellor was most away, and left the Management of the Office to inferior Officers,

which was a great Trouble to the good Bishop.

Who doth not see, that some Great Men have ventured to exercise an Arbitrary Power? and what Remedy for the Oppressed? This Greatness was too big for a High-Sheriff, the King's highest Representative in his County, to oppose or offend, by an Act of Justice and Mercy. Such Severities have been used as much without the knowledge of the King, as contrary to his Nature, (and perhaps others in superior Power have been abused by their Interiors) who declared himself to be against languinary Laws, in the Case of *Mr. Holdcraft*; (who was a Prisoner many Years in *Cambridge Castle*, and threatened with Banishment or Death, on 35 *Eliz.*) and was heard to say, It was a barbarous Act in the Bishop of *Bristol*, to be against the removal of worthy *Mr. Thompson* out of a loathsome Chamber above a Privy, when sick of a high Fever; of which he died, in *Bristol-Goal*. His Royal Clemency extended far into the West, in the Enlargement of *Mr. Tregosse*, by a special Order to the Marshal of *Bodmin*, which was a noted Answer to his Prayers; and who released *Mr. Parsons*, and remitted his Fine at the Intercession of the Lord *Newport*. The Justice of several of the Judges, and of some Deputy-Lieutenants, and Justices, who have qualified the Heats of others, deserves an honourable Observation, and they have as great a Share in the Honour of being of the Government, as they who arrogate to themselves the sole or eminent Title, that a Man cannot relate their extravagant Miscarriages, but they are ready to arraign him as a petty Traytor against the Government, thereby to keep Sufferers in awe, from making Complaints, or speaking Truth. But some particular Persons have given all the Vent they could to their Enmity against Nonconformist-Ministers; if not against Religious Duties, and followed them beyond the Boundaries of Law.

Some acting upon the Act of Uniformity beyond Law, have been restless till they procured an Act against Conventicles. Great Complaints were made of the Nonconformists Meetings, when Sir *Edward Turner*, (the Speaker, presented the Bill against Conventicles, (the first Act) he told his Majesty: 'What we were intent upon these weighty Affairs, we were often interrupted by Petitions, and Letters, and Motions, representing the unsettled Condition of some Counties, by reason of Phanaticks, Sectaries, and Nonconformists: They differ in their Shapes and Species, and accordingly are more or less dangerous; but in this they all agree, they are no Friends to the established Government in Church or State. He calls Conventicles, the Seed-Plots and Nurseries of their Opinions, undeniable pretence of Religious Worship.

From the few Narratives given in before, and an ordinary Observation of Times, and the Knowledge we have how easy a thing it is to procure Addresses, Motions, Petitions, for any thing, and against any thing, which some great Men would have, we may imagine from what kind of Men such Representations were made. And considering that such a Representation thus made to the King, so long a Stranger in his own Kingdom, by a Speaker in Parliament, it is wonderful, the King did not proceed to an utter Extirpation of all Nonconformists, as Enemies to his Government, and no Lovers of his Person, in whom the Regality is invested. And to tell the King, that all Nonconformists are no Friends to the established Government, was to motion a fair Reward of the Loyalty of very many, who used all Endeavours to restore his Majesty and Government; and to contradict what the King himself told the Ministers of London, on the Day of his happy Return, when the Reverend Mr. A. Jackson presented him with a Bible in their behalf, as he passed through St. Paul's Church-Yard, to this effect, *That he must attribute his Restoration, under God, to their Prayers and Endeavours.*

This spiritual Antipathy against good Men hath been very troublesome to many wise and moderate Magistrates, and pressed out all the Sowness of some Mens Spirits into the Cup of the Nonconformists, and forced milder Natures into an obsequious Severity to Pride and Anger, which could not be restrained from falling on these Men, that were to be set at naught; and they who shewed them respects, forfeited the Civilities due to themselves.

I will conclude this Head with a few Instances of this Antipathy and Incivility.

A wealthy Citizen, of very good quality, in time of the Plague went to visit his native Country, and secretly to distribute his Charity, which was proportionable to his Estate and Mind; and being in a Town in the Assize time, was brought before some Justices of the Peace; these demanded Bond for his Behaviour, or else he must to Prison. He understanding himself, and being conscious there was no cause of Imprisonment, refused the first, and having a good Spirit, a good Purse, and good Counsel, escaped the last.

After the *Oxford Act* came out, a peaceable and inoffensive Nonconformist was constrained to think of a Removal from a convenient Settlement. He was necessitated to leave his Family, which Separation was next to an Exile to him, and when he could come home, to come in the Night.

He

He employed his Friends, and rode about himself, to find an Habitation. After much enquiry he was directed to a very good convenient House, which he was glad of, with respect to his Wife, who was a worthy Gentlewoman, and bore her part of his Sufferings with decency and affection. The Landlord was a Courtier. The Minister took the House of him that was entrusted to let it, gave Earnest, brewed, and prepared for his Settlement; but before he could remove, a Gentleman of that Neighbourhood, who had no power either to let or hinder, came and hung a Lock upon the Door of the House, and wrote a Letter to the Landlord at London, acquainting him with what he had done, and begging his Pardon for the Presumption, for he thought *it was not fit that a Nonconformist should be his Tenant.* Surely this Gentleman looked upon a Nonconformist, as the Samaritans upon the Jews, and would deny him Water, or not receive him into his House, or bid him *God speed.* And so the Gentleman was to seek again for an Habitation, to his great perplexity and trouble.

A Gentleman of Quality and Truth gave me this Relation of one within his own knowledge: One, (saith he) a very worthy Person, was formerly exercised with Witchcraft, which the Witch confessing, was brought before some Justices, one of whom (said to be a famous Persecutor) bid her go home, and *if she bewitched none but Fanaticks, she should never be troubled for him.* And so he had no relief from the Law, nor Ease otherwise, till the Witch died, several Years after.

Did they who so strongly brought in our Terms, foresee that there would be Nonconformists, and that Nonconformity would not only eject them out of their Habitations and Benefices, but out of Corporations, and their own hired Houses, but exclude them out of the common Right of Humanity and Justice, then they have the greater cause to repent. If they did not, they are the more innocent Causes of many and great Troubles to many truly good Men, and are engaged to endeavour their Deliverance from all these Troubles.

It is remarkable, that the most active Instruments in this Anti-Evangelical Work, have been none of the best, but indeed the worst of Men.

And of them it may be noted, (1.) What their Quality is, and hath been. (2.) What their Impiety, and heinous Wickedness, of the grossest Nature. (3.) What their Success hath been. (4.) What Appearances have been of God against them, and what their Ends have been. Some of them have been convinced, converted, and taken off from this Way and Courses, and some have been made Examples of humane and divine Justice.

There

There are abundance of inferior Officers, that are very vicious and dishonest, and yet nothing is to be seen very remarkably differing them from other vicious and poor People; but that of all Sorts of Instruments, these Informers should be noted out by Divine Providence, as Examples of notorious Vices, Falshood, Perjuries, and miserable Deaths, may be a Warning to the worst of Men, not to grow so bad, and bold against the Ways of God.

It is not necessary to refer the following Narratives unto the above-mentioned Heads; I shall not pretend to so much unprofitable Exactness, but relate what is well attested, in a promiscuous way.

About the Year 1674, about twenty five Persons, Men and Women, were indicted for a Rout or Riot in *Stafford-shire*, (that is to say, for a Meeting for Religious Exercise): The Prosecutors were, *Thomas Ward*, Bayliff to the Lord *Stafford*, (executed for Treason, and the Popish Plot) and five more, whereof one died immediately, others lost their Places, and others came to Poverty.

One *Holmes*, an Informer, hunting to find out Mr. *Bakewell's* Meeting in the Night, fell into a Pit of Water, and was in danger to be drowned, had not some helped him out; which Danger did operate upon him, so as to say, that he would go no more upon that account.

And Mr. *B.* Minister of *B.* met Mr. *Bakewell*, and professed he was sorry for any thing he either said or did against him, to bring him into Trouble.

It is observed, That those who became Enemies to Mr. *Bakewell* of *Burton*, had been Professors of Piety, but fell from it, and they fell into great and apparent Decays of Estates, even to Poverty. [Note, Most commonly they who never made a shew of Piety, or fell from it, take the way of Informing.] — Godliness is gainful, and hath the Promise of the Life that now is; but Ungodliness hath the contrary Curses.

I will confirm this Observation with a fearful Example of Apostacy and Wickedness, most remarkably punished, with Ruine of a good Estate, and a most miserable shameful Death.

The Narrative was communicated to me by a Gentleman of great Worth.

John Hunncke of *Brintree* in *Essex*, was the Son of a serious, discreetly pious, wealthy Draper and Grocer in that Town. A pious Education and Example had little Efficacy upon him; but being witty, and capable of the Management of his own and his Father's Trade, was left Co-Executor with his Mother-in-Law, who prudently agreed with him,

to get into her own hands her Part, and the Portion of one Child. He married the Daughter of a very worthy Person, had four Children by her, observed Family-Duties, and wanted not Gifts, was wont to go sometimes to hear the Nonconformists, who were afterwards persecuted by him.

Not many Months after his Wife died, he grew wild and debauched, swearing, drinking, and with his drawn Sword forcing others to drink up to his Measure. He was very vexatious to his Dealers, and unrighteous in his Trade, unnatural and unjust in detaining his Sister's Portion, compelling her Husband to go to Law, forswearing himself about his Father's Will, that it was lost, and that his Father died in Debt as much as the Estate would satisfy, which was prized at 2200 l. besides 500 l. brought in as bad Debts, the most of which this Man recovered. He sued his Brother-in-Law, arrested him, and in person goes with the Bayliff to see him in Prison, not ceasing to put him to great Charges, till his Brother-in-Law died. In nine or ten Years time he consumed all his Father left him and his other Children, ran far into Debt, and cast himself into the King's-Bench.

The first Lord's-Day after the Act against Conventicles came in force, he began to inform, and (as was said) he reckoned to get Sixty Pounds per Week by that good Work, after the falling of other Trades. But God would have stopp'd him, if his Heart had not been hardened: for before that Lord's-Day came, one of his Children looking into a Tub of Water, fell into it, and was drowned. When he heard of it in an Ale-house, he made no haste home; and when he came, he had his Neighbours, that came to see if they could recover the Child, be gone, they had no Business there. The Child (as is remembered) was buried on the Saturday, and the next day he went and informed the Officers of a Meeting, with Witnesses to attest his Information. The Officers charged him to go along with them, and forced him in, (he being unwilling to go in when he came to the Door,) and threw them the People: When he came in, they shoved him up over against the Preacher, he would neither look up, nor speak, but fell a trembling. The Officers cried, *This is your Informer*, he answered, *I am no Informer, I will be no Informer*. But being reproached for his Faint-heartedness, and animated by some, he came again the next Lord's-Day, and continued the greatest part of that Summer with great Fury, taking some with him, riding about, and searching, to the Expence of about Fifty Pounds, but not getting Five, (a thriving Trade!) During this Time he grew more debauched and vile, reckoning this amongst his Glories, that he had converted, and brought more to Church than all the Preachers. 'Tis said, he fill'd up a Shilling, to see whether he should go

go to God or the Devil, as that fell Cross or Pile. He hath sworn he would kill the Preacher, and forsworn himself often, swearing such Persons to be at the Meeting, who were not, but divers Miles off. When one Mr. *Brimhall*, an aged pious Man, was to be buried, he provided several Fiddlers to go to the Burial-House, where he pranced with his Horse before the Door, and broke the Windows with his Staff, and would have the Fiddlers go along with him, playing by the Corps, with Language fitted for his Mouth and Actions.

He found no Success or Advantage by his Informing, but about a Year after God took him to a Reckoning: He was broken and blasted in his Body, as before in his Estate; his Eyes sunk in their Holes, and his Flesh consumed, &c. so that he was not known to his Acquaintance; his Strength failed him, that he could not go abroad; he cast away his Estate, and his Friends cast him off: And now what place was left to receive him? None, but a common lower Room in a poor Hostler's House, in the Noise and Company of poor rude Children. Thus his Pride was stained and humbled. But his Heart seemed to be more humbled yet, because he sent for the Preacher whom he had disturbed and persecuted, a first, second, and third time; and when he came to visit him, he spake, *You are the Person I have a great desire to see; I think you, and the People whom I did persecute, to be my Friends.* He said, he had been so vile a Wretch, and guilty of so many and great Sins, that he knew not by which he had most dishonoured God: He had sinned against Light, and was afraid God was not at peace with him; and that it had been better for him, he had been a Toad than a Man. He was very importunate and urgent with the Minister to pray with him, and would have one stand at the Door in the mean time, that he might not be disturbed by any Company, and that the Children should be all put out. When the Minister ended his Prayer, he was very thankful to him, and reached out his hand to him, and held him long. He said, he desired to repent of all his Sins, was afraid, if God should try him with longer Life, he should return to his Filthiness; but he looked for Death, which came and took him away a day or two after, but (as 'tis feared) unprepared and impenitent, upon such Reasons as I am loth to recite out of the Narrative, for their ill Example.

There are several remarkable Passages of God's Judgments upon him: (1.) He had one Child drowned, when he went to inform. (2.) Another choak'd at Nurse, after he had gone on a while. (3.) Was crossed in his Hopes of Gain by Informing. (4.) The deformed Consumption of his Body, and being cast off by his Friends. (5.) That so haughty a Person should lie in a contemptible Place and State. (6.) That a third Child should be taken by an Host, to be kept in Charity. (7.) That the only

visible Sign of Repentance should be, to send for that Minister, and desire his Prayers, rather than any other. (8.) That being a Prisoner at London, he should, upon leave obtained, come to die in that Place and State, in the Face of his Companions, to convince and terrify them, and of them that he had persecuted, to acknowledg his Fault.

This Service proves (as the Devil's commonly doth) unprofitable; a Man may spend all in it, but is very uncertain of gaining any thing by it. It is rarely seen, that the Devil bears the Charges of his Servants, as others have found to their Cost, in this present Life.

One *W. V.* of *M. H.* hath been very poor ever since he took up the Calling, having scarce Bread to eat, and most remarkably visited in his Family. His Brother Informer, *J. H.* about two Years after the Act against Conventicles came out, threw up the Trade as unprofitable; and since he became an Auditor of *Mr. M. C.* And one time this *J. H.* was informed of (by new Informers) as being present at a Meeting there, and was fined 5 s. He was a very serious and devout Hearer.

After Sir *John Hartopp* was chosen Knight for *Leicester-shire*, against a great Opposition, they who voted for him, were called *Hartoppians*, and a Revenge was contrived upon the Protestant Dissenters of *H.* To that end, one *J—W—* was made Constable, who indicted them all, not one spared, upon the Statute of Twenty Pounds *per Month*; which Fines amount to so great a Sum, that understanding Persons compute, if the whole Town of *Harborough* were to be sold for ready Money, one Moiety of the Purchase would not discharge the Fines.

In *Decemb. 1679*, this *Jo. W—* was thrown into *Noribampton-Goal*, and tho none came in against him at the Assizes, the Judg saw sufficient cause to continue him in Prison; but upon great Solicitation, he was bailed till the Summer-Assizes. Within three Weeks after his coming home to *Harborough*, he took upon him to be Informer for the King. At the Summer-Assizes, he appeared to save his Bail, and to receive a Sentence of Condemnation (as it proved) from Judg *Ellis*, and Monday following was appointed for Execution, but it was by some means, not publicly known, procured he might be respited till Thursday following, at which time there was a vast Confluence of People come together, from the Town and Country, a great way about, who knew him to be a grand Malefactor, to see Execution: But in the Nick of Time a Reprieve came down, (as some have said, without the King's Knowledg,) So little abash'd was he at the Sentence of Death, that within an hour after he committed his common Sin in the Goal, as was reported upon good Credit.

And

And on the expected Execution-Day, he made himself merry at the great Concourse that came to the sight of it. But after this he came home again, and made great Brags, that the Fanaticks should repay his Charges, (of procuring Reprieves, and other Charges, which cost some hundreds) reckoning his Molety would come to Four Hundred Pounds. But as he could not leave the pursuit of his evil Deeds, so the Justice of God pursued him, and took him, (for Horse-stealing, Coining, &c.) and Vengeance fell upon him at *Wisbich*, where he was, after many Escapes, once again condemned, and executed.

There is a Successor of his near the same place, and three of his perjured Hirelings, who take no warning as yet, and may in time become Examples to them that take no warning: They can to appearance as freely forswear themselves as they can speak, being hardened in Sin, and senseless of Hell, and having Countenance, dare shew their Faces.

At *East-Salcomb* in *Devon*, there dwelt one *Jean Baston*, a Widow, aged, and blind, who for a supposed Conventicle kept at her House, *Anno 1673*, was fined Twelve Pounds, and for non-payment of it, was threatened with a Goal. After some Weeks, the Officers came and broke open her Doors, and carried away much Goods above the value, terrifying her over and over with the Goal, and as was conceived, labouring to extort dangerous Words from her. They sold as many Goods as were worth thirteen Pound, for Fifty Shillings; six Hogstheads, valued at Forty Shillings, for nine Shillings; and Pewter, Feather-Beds, &c. for Twenty Shillings; and demanded of her Tenants her Rent, by which means she suffered much.

This is signed by *J. B.* and the Story related by another hand, and sufficiently attested.

The Constable having seized *J. Baston's* Goods, told me, *We have been up and down about our Office, seizing the old Woman's Goods: This is the Fruit of your Rebellion. And as for Mr. Geo. Cawley, (the Preacher) he hath spoken Treason: To whom I replied, No, Sir, I hope not: Yes, said he, and if he do not die, I will die for him.* Sir — managed that false Accusation against him, from which he was cleared at the Assizes.

The Constable that falsely accused *Mr. Coles* of *S.* was taken ill at *Exeter*, and continued ill a Night and a Day: On Friday he endeavoured to go homewards with his Neighbours. In his Journey a wild Duck flew over his Head and backward and forward, at which his Horse made a stop, and would not go forward. His Company demanded the reason of his Stand; he replied, he could not go further, *I see a Fire before me.* A while after he went on, but the same Fire followed him to and fro all the way homeward.

ward. After his coming home, he fancied Thieves to be about his House, attempting to break open the Doors; he heard such a Sound and Noise, he sent down his Servant-Maid to see, who found all fast and quiet. She having lighted a Candle, he cried out, There are some coming up Stairs with great Lights, &c. Thus he continued till Lord's-Day at Night, and about two or three in the Morning died, senseless of his Condition. Thus it proved true, Mr. C. should die, or he die for him; he died, but not for Mr. C.

The Constable and Assistants, that ransacked the old Widow's House, brought forth the Pulpit into the High-Way, with half a Hogthead of Sider, and therewith a Company of base Fellows drank Healths in the Pulpit, and when they had done, brake the Pulpit in pieces.

Edw. Warden's Bible was distrained for his Fine of Three Shillings, when other Goods were refused.

See the Piety of some of our Suppressors of Conventicles: Preachers are threatned with Hanging, and the Death of Traytors; they pull down a Pulpit, to set up Healthing in it; tear the Pulpit, distrain and sell the Bible to choofe, when they might have choice of other Goods.

Novemb. 1670. an Information was taken by *J. T. Esq.* and given by certain lewd Fellows, against some near *Cruse Marchard* in *Devon*. The Informers were, *John Parridge*, that went always armed for fear of Bayliffs, *Chr. Short*, and *Jo. Short*: These lay lurking about the House of *Tho. Melshurst*, suspecting a Meeting. Soon after they gave out, there had been Praying, or Preaching, or Expounding there, but which they could not tell, because they were kept off from the House by a great Bull-Dog, (which was shortly after poisoned.) The Justice took a general Information, (whether upon Oath or not, is not said) and sent out his Warrants to bring certain Persons before him; one of which understanding the Informers were in the House, desired the Justice to call them, and asked the Informers, how they could tell there was Praying, or Preaching, or Expounding? and desired to know which was done, seeing by their own Confession they were kept off by the Dog. The Justice perceiving them to be at a loss for an Answer, made Answer for them, *They might know well enough which it was by the Tone*; and upon that convicted them, and among the rest, one *Nich. Melshurst*, who was two Miles from the Place at the same time, as could be sufficiently proved, paid his Fine. And *Agnes Brook*, Daughter of *G. Br. of Morehard*, was convicted and fined, who had been dead several Years before; I hope therefore she paid not her Fine, nor was threatned, or sent to Goal for Non-payment.

Now observe the Vices of these Persons, and their Ends by divine Justice. P. and Sb. were strongly suspected for stealing six Oxen, four from G. Bodley of *Morchard*, and two from *Hen. Lee* of the same Parish: They were apprehended, and brought to their Trial, and Sb. was found guilty, and burnt in the hand, and since hath consumed his Estate, and is fled the Country for fear of Arrests. P. died not long after; and the other Sb. was taken in the Act of the unnatural Sin of Buggery, was found guilty, and died for it.

One *Helmere* was suspected to be a Conspirator in the said Information, and was apprehended as a Partner with the forenamed in stealing the Oxen, found guilty, and burnt in the hand. And since that, he and his Son were taken in the Act of Burglary, was sent to Prison, which he brake twice, and is fled, and not taken.

These Relations are ready to be attested by Persons of unsuspected Credit.

Aug. 26. 1676, four Informers had laid a Design to take Mr. J. Barret of *Nottingham*, and his Hearers, who at that time had none to give intelligence from abroad of any coming to disturb them. At the Town's-End the Informers divided themselves; some rode for a Warrant, others came to espy the Meeting. One of them walked again and again between two Stiles leading into the Yard, belonging to the House where the Meeting was; and yet (as he confessed to the Owner of the House some time after) he knew not what ailed him, but he had not power to go over the Stile, tho sometimes he had his hand upon it; and tho the House and Stacks about it, were shewn him before he came to Town, and had no reason to doubt but that was the House, it standing at a distance from any other House, yet he turned to another House, being nearest to it, where a Woman being at home, was asked, *Whether it was not such a Man's House? or whether the Meeting was not there?* And she saith still, she was so surprized with fear, that she could make him no Answer: whereupon he said to the Woman, *Canst thou not speak? art thou dumb? or art thou mad?* This Account she gave them, but it being so long since, she may have forgotten; but being lately asked of it, she saith, he said, *Art thou a Fool?* But by this Confusion they were in, the People met, were gotten away before any Informers came in. The Informers haunted them several times after, and one time came in when there were but four besides the Family, and the Children of the Town under sixteen Years of Age. When they saw how they were crossed several times, and Mr. Barret had charged him that came first, and his Companion, with breach of God's Law, not keeping the Sabbath-Day, but hindring others, and

and put him in mind of a great Fit of Sickness he had, when he lay under very great Terrors, how often he had visited him, and how welcome he was to him then, to visit and pray with him. This Informer and his Companion seemed to relent. One of them was (not long after) put into the Goal for Deer-stealing.

Mr. O. H. makes this Relation of a great Amazement and Disturbance of Mind, upon some that were to take the Names of his Hearers.

' May 22. 1670. As I was rising out of my Bed, my Servant came to me, and told me, there were two Men desired to speak with me; whose Business was to ask me, If I durst adventure to preach in the Chappel, Mr. H. being absent, and no notice being given to the People, many of whom would come, and be disappointed? I utterly denied at first: They were loth to bring me into Trouble; yet if I was willing, the Chappel-Doors should be opened, and the Bell rung. I considered of it, consulted some Neighbours, begged direction of God, and about an hour after I consented, upon these Considerations: They were my ancient People, I was forcibly thrust from them, the Spirits of Men were much moderated; I knew the Sabbath would be profaned; it being *Whit-Sunday*, many Strangers walking abroad to see their Friends; Quakers twist us, that we will not venture upon Hazards: But above all, my Lord's Example, and the Necessity of Souls; and who knows what Good may be done?

' Upon this, about nine of the Clock, I went up, read, sung, prayed, preached quietly, on *Judg. 5. 31. Let them that love him be as the Sun, when he goeth forth in his Strength.* About one in the Afternoon we met again, and about three of the Clock, Mr. St. Ell. brought Th. H. Church-Warden, and Sam. W. Overseer, awing them with a Fine of five Pounds if they refused. St. Ell. put in the Officers before him, who were exceedingly daunted. One of them was so awed and ashamed, that he crept down into a Seat, and was so exceeding sick, that he could not give account of one Person. The Informer went along among the People, looked streight at me, said nothing, went down the Alley, and look'd upon the People as he went along. It was a Cause of Distraction to us; but I went on, and called to the People to look Proofs, which would be a Help to them against that Distraction. When they went out, St. E. sent Th. H. again into the Chappel, to take Names: He again walked through the North Alley, stood at Seats ends, went out into the Chappel-Yard, where they conferred Notes, writ down Names: And tho the Chappel was full of their own Neighbours, yet they could not take ten Names, they were so confounded. The Munday seven-Night follow-

following, Mr. W. and Mr. C. two Justices, took my Business into Examination. The Informer St. E. stood there, examining the Officers by Interrogations: *Did not you see such and such there?* And so they extorted ten Names of many Hundreds that were present.

July 13. 1670, J. M. Constable, Th. H. S. W. came to make distress of my Goods, with three Bearers to carry them away. The Constable took hold of the Bed whereon I lay, put off his Hat, saying, *I seize upon this Bed for his Majesty's use.* I told them, It was enough for them to mark them, and leave them, till they had Chapmen to buy them: They said, the Informer would buy them. So they took Bed, Bedding, Tables, Chairs, Chests, Books, to the value of Fourteen Pounds, for Ten Pounds. My Wife desired them to take Chairs, rather than our Meal-Chest; but they laid a Curtain upon the Floor, and poured out the Meal upon it, and took away our Chest. They carried the Goods into an Alehouse, and drank upon them, got Prizers, who prized them at 10*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* They had bespoken a good Dinner, saying, They would bring Over-plus Goods enough to pay for all. They prized ten Books at thirty Shillings. They caused the Bell-man to cry the Goods in *Hallifax*, August 13. but could sell none of them. The Justices bad the Officers to take them themselves. They answered, they had Goods enough. The Constable grew weary of the Business, delivered all to the Hands of the succeeding Constable. The House where they were laid up grew weary of them, and desired the next Constable to find a Room for them; or they would cast them out: They got leave to set them in a Barn

*Nonconformists Goods
a dead Commodity;
Who paid for the
Feast then?*

in *Coley-Hall*. June 6. 1671. One Robert Reyner of *Wakefield*, brought a Cart and five Horses to fetch them away, — When they laid a Chair in the Cart, one said, *Where's Heywood's God now, that he used to pray to?* They remained still at *Wakefield*, August 15. 1680.

In December 1668, Mr. John Shuttlewood, sometimes Minister of R. in the County of Leicester, was taken with many others, singing a Psalm by M. B. and thirty or forty Horsemen with Swords drawn and Pistols cock'd, several of both Sexes were beaten and driven into the Field, and dismissed upon promise of appearing next day before some Justice of Peace; Mr. Sh. was examined by Justice S. when he had been at his Parish Church to hear Divine Service? Mr. Sh. answered, he knew none charged him for Absence: the Justice asked him, if he would promise to go the next Sunday? Mr. Sh. answered, he did not know how Divine Providence might dispose of him before that time; upon this the Justice made him his *Minimus* for

The Conformist's Fourth Plea

a Breach of the 35 of *Eliz.* and delivered him to the Custody of one *Charles Gibbons*, a Quarter-Master in a Troop of the Trained Bands, to convey him to *Leicester Goal*.

It being too late that Night, they rested where they were, and *Mr. Sh.* craving a Blessing upon their Meat, *Gibbons* comes into the Room, and swore a bloody Oath, and said, *What, are you a preaching?* Soon after a Neighbour Gentleman came, and made request, that *Mr. Sh.* and the rest of the Prisoners might go that Night to their own Houses, and offered a Bond of a thousand Pounds for their Appearance; the Gentleman pressing hard for that Night's Liberty. *Gibbons* girt his Sword about him, and swore desperately, that since he loved them so well, he should go with them, and continued swearing all the Night, that in case he stir'd, (to use his own Phrase) he would make the Sun shine through him. Next Morning *Gibbons* sent the Prisoners away with some Souldiers, and staid himself with the Gentleman; and glad they were, they were going to Prison, as being in worse than Prison till they were there. *Mr. Sh.* and the other continued in Prison till the 24th of *February*, and were then dismiss'd.

Anno 1670, soon after the Act against Conventicles came out, the said *Gibbons* came with armed Men, and took *Mr. Sh.* and six or seven at a House in *Th.* and carried them to an Ale-house, and after some time dismiss'd them upon promise to appear at four a Clock next Morning at that Place; next day he carried them all to three several places in *Leicestershire* and *Northamptonshire*, keeping them a considerable while in each Place, and at last brought them to *C.* in *Leicestersh.* where Justice *C.* would have extorted some Confessions from the Prisoners, and *Gibbons*, though commonly a desperate Swearer, told the Justice in the presence of them all, *He would*

damn his Soul for none of them. He could not

*A common Swearer
afraid of Perjury and
Damnation, is much bet-
ter than those who fear
neither Perjury nor Hell.
Indeed he could not swear
a Conventicle, far as the
last Sentence went out of
the Preacher's Mouth,
he came to the Window
and swore a dreadful
Oath.*

swear there was a Conventicle, whereupon the Justice was about to dismiss them: but a Lawyer present told him, he might convict them upon notorious Evidence, which he did, and sent Warrants to distrain upon *Mr. Sh.* for 20 l. and 20 l. on the owner of the House, and 5 s. a piece on others; *Mr. Sh.* conveyed away his Cartel, but the rest paid. Anno 1672, while *Mr. Sh.* had the King's Licence, *Gibbons* came upon him, and took him and the Master of the House, and brought them before Capt. *C.* of *L.* who then refused to act, but afterwards did send out his Warrants to distrain 20 l. on *Mr. Sh.* 20 l. on the House, &c. but both

escaped, tho not without Damages: but great Fines were laid upon the Hearers.

Hearers. In the end of February, 74, *Gibbons* came with armed Men to Mr. *Sh.'s* House in *Lubnam, Leicester-shire*, roaring into the Congregation after his wonted manner, and took several Names, appointing Mr. *Sh.* and them to meet him next day, at an Alehouse in *Shoaresby*, to appear before his Great Master, Col. *F.* who was wont to furnish him with Warrants before-hand. But the Colonel's Son, a Son of his old Age, dying that morning, (who fell sick, as it is said, that Day his Father gave his Warrants to break up that Meeting.) They all appeared according to promise, and were dismiss'd, upon promise to appear upon lawful Summons. Instead of such a Summons, *Gibbons* got a Warrant of Sir *Tb. B.* (not long after deceased) to distrain upon Mr. *Sh.* for forty Pounds: And the Officers took away seven Milch-Cows of Mr. *Sh.'s*, and offered them to Sale; and the best Chapman that came, was *D. S. of M.* who paid seven Pounds for them, and Six-pence Earnest, (without the privity of Mr. *Sh.*) which was paid to the Officers, who paid it to the Justices, who gave Receipts for the Money.

D. S. branded four of the Cows, and joisted them in the Grounds of one *J. W. of Langton*. *Gibbons*, and his great Companion *Percy*, hearing of the Cows, go to the Constable, who had a Warrant to distrain upon the said *Jo. Wilson* for 2 l. 15 s. for being at the same Meeting; *Gibbons* and *Percy* got the Warrant out of the Constable's hands, pretending to take something out of it, but it was to put more in, viz. to empower *Percy* to distrain the four Cows. And so both went into the Ground, and drave the Cows, impounded them about an Hour, and then took them out, and drave them to *Gilmerton*, where they were met by another of their Companions, one *Savage*, and set a Guard upon the Cows. *D. S.* hearing these things, went to Capt. *C.* for a Warrant, to fetch *Gibbons* before him upon suspicion of Felony; but the Justice refused to give him his Warrant except he would lay flat Felony to their charge, which *D. S.* could not do, because they impounded them first. He goes to *Gibbons*, to know by what Authority he took away the Cows, demanded the Cows, which they refused to do, *Gibbons* telling him, he should not have a Tail of them to wipe his Mouth with. He went to Mr. *H. Under-Sheriff*, for a *Replevin*, which he told him he could not grant, because it was against the King.

One of the Persons distrained upon, came to pay 2 l. 15 s. to the Officers; *Gibbons* caught up the Money, and gave it to his Partner *Percy*, and said, he should be Constable; and away they went with it.

D. S. heard, that *Gibbons* had conveyed away the four Cows in the Night, after which he never heard of them more, and sent for a Writ for him; but when the Bayliffs came to arrest *Gibbons*, they found he was

M

protected

protected by the above-said Col. F. a Parliament-Man, (and in the List of Pensioners) as one of his Servants.

But the Justice and Vengeance of God took him out of that Sanctuary; for being at *Lutterworth*, in *Decemb.* 1675, very full of Drink, and having that day given out many threatening Speeches against several Dissenters, he would not be persuaded to stay all Night, tho it was late, about nine in the Night, but would go home: But when he had gone about half a Mile towards home, he fell into a Ditch, through which a little Water runs; and falling asleep (as we must suppose) he damm'd up that little Issue of Water by which he was found drowned next Morning by a Milk-Maid, in a very remarkable manner; for all his Body was above Water, except his Neck and Face: neither was the Water high enough, when it was damm'd up, to cover all his Face, for some part of his Nose and Forehead were seen above Water.

A Conforming Minister, and a worthy Man, since deceased, who knew him well, entred this following Remark in *Beard's Theatre of Judgments*: '*Charles Gibbons*, a notorious Swearer and Drunkard, having been at *Lutterworth* in *Leicester-shire*, being full of Drink, and it being late at Night, was dissuaded from going home, which was at *Kimcot*, two Miles off, swore he would go home in spite of all the Devils in Hell; but he was found dead next morning in a shallow Run of Water, which did not cover his Body, betwixt *Lutterworth* and *Milborton*.

One of *Gibbons's* Companions, that had been drinking with him that Evening, and parted with him when he went out of Town, was sadly affrighted in his going home to his own House in *Lutterworth*, with something like a black Sow, which he said, when he heard next Morning that *Gibbons* was dead, was the Devil going to drown *Gibbons*.

When *Gibbons* was found, he had not one Penny in his Purse, and his Goods were valued at Two Shillings and Six-Pence. Here's one Example more of outrageous Profaneness, a miserable sudden Death, and deep Poverty. Who ever read or heard of an Informer, blest in Body or Goods?

And the Fortune of his Companion *Percy* ran very low; for all he could muster up to pay the Charges of *D. S.'s* Suit, which was *9 l. 10 s.* came but to six Pound, made off the little Goods he had, fled his Country, became a Driver of Beasts about *Islington*, afterwards a Foot-Souldier, afterwards a Beggar, and so he died, as is commonly said.

In *October*, 1681, *Watson* and *Holdsworth*, both Inhabitants of *Deeping* in *Lincoln-shire*, (*Watson* was a very witty, close, cunning Fellow, *Holdsworth* was a heavy, clumsy, poor Fellow; the one fitted to direct, the

the others to follow) came to *Okham* in *Rusland*, (in hopes of good Markets, by the Sale of Modesty, Truth, and their precious Souls, and other Mens Goods) there a Nonconformist Preacher and his Congregation met out of Church-time: The Preacher kept up in an upper Room, and the Doors of the House were lock'd, so that the Informers could only sometimes hear a Voice indistinctly, but they heard enough for their purpose: They went and swore against the Preacher, (whose Name they had learned since their coming to Town) that there was an unlawful Meeting in his House. Upon which a Warrant was issued out for Twenty Pounds upon him; and yet they named no Preacher, nor Hearers.

They informed of a Meeting of Quakers, and swore there were ten Persons at it, and particularly one *Bowman*, who was not there, nor had been there in half a Year before.

These Fellows, in their return home, were overtaken by a sober Person, who rode about two Miles with them, and, to their great vexation, discoursed of the Calling of Informers, and the untimely Ends of several of them, and therefore warn'd them often and earnestly to take heed: But *Vatson* said, The Dissenters were Hell-born Rogues, and an Informers Trade was lawful.

About *February* following (last past) *Vatson* fell ill, his Tongue was black and swelled, some while before he died, and led his Companion the way into the other World, where there is not as much as a Preacher's Voice to be heard. Within a Week after *Holdsworth* followed him, crying out in his Sickness, *The Devil, the Devil, he will fetch me, do not you see him?* and wishing he had not engaged in that Way.

These miserable Wretches were poor and broken Men before they took this Trade, were defeated of the Fines levied upon their Informations, in the Parts where they lived, and died extreme poor.

Some Souldiers came one Lord's-Day, in *April* last, 1682, Low-Sunday, as it is remembred, to break up a Meeting, and to take Mr. *Browning* of *R. in Northampton-shire*. The Constable admonished them to be well advised what they did: For (said he) when Sir ——— was alive, he eagerly prosecuted these Meetings, and engaged eight Souldiers of the County-Troop therein, whereof my self was one. Sir ——— himself is dead, (it is said, he died not long after) six of the eight Souldiers are dead; some of them were hanged, and some of them broke their Necks; and I my self fell off my Horse, and broke my Neck in the Act of Prosecuting them, and it cost me thirty Shillings to be cured and recovered. It hath given me such warning, that for my part I am resolved I will never meddle with them more. He told this

M 2

Story

Story to them all at several times that day. This Story is related by others with some considerable Circumstances; but this being the more moderate Relation, I give it almost in the very same Words, in which it was sent from a good and reputable hand to a Friend.

Several Justices of Peace were in a great Heat that day in the pursuit of the Preacher, and the Meeting; but the Birds were flown, before they could cast their Net, and so escap'd.

I do not hear that this Constable, for all his Conviction, is at any time a Hearer at that Meeting. It is remarkable, how such Persons may be restrained, and how readily the Conscience, a little awakened, makes Constructions of the Divine Providences to be Acts of Judgment, and Admonitions to them.

From the same hand I am assured of another Example: Since that, *W. H.* one of the Church-wardens of the same Parish, and one of the most imbittered Enemies of the Meetings, who had often Quarrels with some of his near Relations about them, and especially the Night before he died, who was suddenly struck dead in his own Yard, and never spoke, nor breathed one Breath after he was taken with it: As he had no notice of its Arrest, till it came; so he gave no notice of his being to die, to any other. Surely the Constable must needs be confirmed in his Resolutions against Acting, by this sudden Death. Some threatening Words against the Barn, the common Name of Meetings, spoken by him, are by some remembred; but general Words are most sparing, and I will content myself with them.

That it may not be thought that our Nonconformist Brethren do stretch and enlarge small and ordinary Occurrences, and Acts of Divine Providence, I will shew you what Caution and Modesty is to be seen in their Accounts of Passages. One writes thus, who is known to have suffered Imprisonment, and to wade through many Troubles, and is at this time under a most severe and watchful Eye: *As to my self, I have been so careless in keeping any exact Account of what I have met with, that I cannot do it: In the general, I can only say this, That in all I have met with, God hath so dealt with me, that I have suffered very little.* Another to his Friend: *I could have sent you some other Accounts, but that I and others are afraid to grate too much upon some Persons.* And another to his enquiring Friend, with a like Modesty: *Thus much I know in the general, that several foul Perjuries have Informers in this County been guilty of, for which some of them have been prosecuted and convicted, and afterwards fled and absconded, to escape Punishments. — And very many of the Informers and Persecutors, have been Persons* of

of most profligate Lives.— And the Hand of God hath most eminently appeared against some of them, by untimely Deaths, by the Hand of God remarkably stretched forth against them, as I have been certainly informed, by Persons of undoubted Credit; but in regard I cannot give an exact and particular Account of all Circumstances, I am constrained to pass by these Things in silence, than to wrong the Account by any Mistakes.

I cannot pass over one Observation within mine own view. In the Country where I live, the Informers are a new Set of Men; some that were Informers in former Years are yet alive, but desist and refuse to inform, either upon Conviction of Conscience, Fear of Evil, Observation of the short, shameful, and miserable Ends of others, or other strong Restraints upon them. I am credibly informed of one, whose Name and Person I know, that hath gone to a Nonconformist Preacher, with these or the like Words: *Sir, I have done you Wrong, and brought Trouble upon you; I pray forgive me, &c.*

But most free and full, truly pious and penitent, is this Copy of a Letter, which was sent by one that had been an Informer, to a molested Dissenter, faithfully transcribed by me in the Informer's own Words.

A Letter of a penitent Informer.

Goodman Fenn,

I Acknowledg mine Error, and that I did foolishly in coming to your House, and in disturbing the Company which were met there, and in bringing you and them on the Stage, and into a suffering Condition; which hath several times troubled me very much, and at this time lies heavy upon me, because I am not in a Condition to return you and your Friends, what is out of your and their Pockets: But if ever it shall please God to make me in a Condition able thereto, I do intend, to the best of my Power, to bear your and your Friends Disbursements, which you and your Friends were put to by my occasion, by returning to you and them, some of what you and they have been forced to pay by my means. And in the mean time, I do earnestly desire you, and your Friends which have been Sufferers with you, to forgive me the Wrong which I have done to every one of you. I do desire you, and all that were Partakers with you in your Sufferings, to be earnest with God in your Prayers for me, not once, but often, to desire the Lord to forgive me the Sin which I committed against him, in what I did against you, and them which were met at your House, when I disturbed Mr. King in his Exercise. How do I know but that God may bear your Prayers for me, and turn his fierce Wrath from me, you being the Persons grie-
ved &

ved? The Almighty God hath been pleased to encourage me to send to you all, which are concerned in the Suffering, by what he did in the Case of Job, chap. 42. vers. 7, 8, 9. So the Lord of Mercy move all your Hearts to pray for me, that he would pardon my Sin, for not doing that which was right to those that were worshipping of him; and it may be the Wrath of God may be appeased at your Request, and have Mercy upon me, and not deal with me according to my Desert. I hope that God of his infinite Mercy will forgive that Sin of doing his Prophets harm, and for offending of his little Ones; and also give me Grace for the Time to come, not only to forbear doing his Prophets harm, and not offending of his little Ones, but do the best I can to defend his Prophets, and cherish his little Ones. The Words of Saul are verified in me, I find it hard to kick against the Pricks.

Hoxne, Suff.
July 8. 1680.

R. S.

I have by these Instances cleared the Ground of the Observations laid down in the Entrance of these Narratives, which I do heartily wish may become effectual Admonitions and Warnings to them that walk in their Steps, to turn them back, before they fall under the like Observation, as Examples of God's Displeasure.

I shall propose some other Objects of God's Displeasure, tho not of Informers, but of such as have opened their Mouths in Menaces against Ministers, that have declared a Spirit of Disobedience against God, and Persecution against his Servants.

The great Use that some make of the Laws is, to be Instruments of their Disaffection to, and Revenge upon such as they hate, not knowing how to come at them by any other Law, being inculpable as to other Crimes and Misdemeanors.

Feb. 13. 1660. One H. H. of T. Ev. in the C. of W. was very active in getting a Warrant against Mr. P. Minister of that Place, and several other Ministers, for not reading Common-Prayer, (while there was an Indulgence in that Point.) He left Order with his Uncle A. H. Constable, that if any such Warrant came in his absence to him, he should speedily execute it: He went that day to G. a Neighbour-Village, and being drunk with one T. C. a debauched Companion of his, coming home, fell from his Horse, and fell down dead in the place.

This

This Judgment of God might have befallen him for his Drunkenness, or he might have escaped it, as many Drunkards do: but his Enmity against his Minister, known to be a worthy good Man, was an Accumulation of his Sins, and a refusing to be taught and reformed by him. What cared such Persons for the Common-Prayer, as it was the Form of Service paid to God? If it had been from Zeal to that, he would have abstained from his scandalous Sins.

June 16. 1661. Mr. B. of B. St. J. said to a Gentleman of Quality, That he would leave never a Horse in his Team, nor Sheep in his Fold, but he would rout out Mr. S. the Minister of the Parish, (who would not comply with Prophaneness) before Harvest, as near as it was, if he did not read Common-Prayer, and that if he were not gone before Harvest, he would be gone himself; God took him at his threatening, for he was gone out of the World before that time came.

June 26. 1661. R. M. of D. and J. B. with other bad Men, had procured the outing of Mr. J. a very eminent Minister of the Place; M. was heard to say, that the day that J. should go away from D. would be the happiest or merriest day in the Year to him: Upon the very day of Mr. J.'s going away, M. going with a little empty Cart and one Horse into the Field, the Horse by a strange Providence, drew the Cart over his Leg, which crushed the Bone to pieces, and tore the Flesh from his Thigh, of which Wound he lay in tormenting pain some days after, and then died miserably.

November 21. 1661, The foresaid J. B. of D. in Wilt, the Enemy of Mr. J. of whom he said blasphemously, that J. and his God had cheated the Parish these 14 Years. He had been drinking at Wily, where he threatened, that he would be at a Neighbour Parish to preach next Sunday; meaning that he would execute a Warrant upon some Phanaticks (as he called them) that would hear a neighbour-Minister preach: But riding homeward that Night, he affronted some sober Travellers upon the Road, drew his Sword upon them and made at them, and one of them in his own defence, shot him with a brace of Bullets into the Body, of which Wound he died that day sevennight. The Gentleman that killed him was tried and acquitted the next Assizes at Sarum.

March 1661. One Thorn of D. who had about that time twelve Month taken a false Oath against the said Mr. J. at the Assize in Sarum, being stricken in the Tongue (as he himself afterwards confessed) before he came out of the Court, which grew worse and worse, and by degrees rotted.

rotted away in his Mouth, till the Worms crawled out; he died desperately and miserably.

Mr. Lewis Facy Minister, imprisoned by a *Capias* in *Bodmyn* Goal in *Cornwall*, was no sooner entred, but was railed at, by a violent spirited Woman in the Prison: He mildly desired her to forbear, kept himself retired, and while he was at Prayer, she came and railed at him, at his Chamber-door, at which she was taken with a Numbness (a Palsy) so that she could not speak nor help her self.

Mr. Collins of *Ostery St. Mary* in *Devonshire*, was by the contrivance of a High Constable, apprehended by a Petty Constable, (lodged in the High Constable's House to that purpose) as he

The famous Acts of this Justice B. may be read in a printed Narrative from Devcn.

was going to a Funeral, by a Warrant from one Justice B. and H. and put under Guard, and made to pay his Guard, till they carried him to Goal for six Months, for living within five Miles of this Parish. The Head Constable goes out of the way, conveying himself to *Exton*, before Mr. Collins was taken. But as near as can be computed the High Constable was taken ill at *Exton*, in the very hour in which the Petty Constable served his Warrant on Mr. Collins, and was carried home, the next day died.

Mr. Thomas Tregosse relates this following Providence of God, in Mercy and Judgment. In the Lent Assize, at *Exon*, 1670, his Trial was put off, the Deputy-Mayor of *Torrington* attending, who was the grand Enemy. At the next Assizes, the said G. S. Deputy-Mayor, could not attend, and thereby Mr. Treg. was acquitted by the Jury. But what hindered or kept his Adversary at home? He had in a drunken Voyage, fallen from his Horse, by which his Shoulder Bone was dislocated, and he became unable to dress or undress himself, and so like to continue to his Death: His Wife, a violent Woman, died of a Tympany (a fearful Spectacle) the Lord's-day Night, after Mr. T. had preached at *Torrington*. One Denis, Brother-in-law to Smith, who rejoiced at the breaking up of the Conventicle, which he said did him more good, than all his Losses did sadden him; this poor Wretch (said he) did hang himself in his Study, and his Estate forfeited to the Town; this great Judgment befel his Wife, to have her Husband hang himself, and his Estate forfeited, who belched out these Words upon Mr. Treg. Hang the Rogue, hang him at the Sign-post, or next Tree, and never send him to *Exon*.

Before ever I saw the Life of the said Mr. Tregosse I received the Substance of a Story related in it, from an indifferent hand resident in those Parts;

Parts; and because it is exposed in Print already, I shall be the more bold to transcribe it: Mr. T. Ro. a Justice of Peace had committed Mr. T. to Prison for three Months; he had not come home out of Prison four days before Mr. Ro. gave out, that he would speedily send him back again to the Place from whence he came. He designed to go to Market to get another Justice of Peace to joyn with him; but before his going thither, he went according to his usual custom, to visit a Tenant's Wife, and in his return, was set upon by his own Bull, which never ran at any one before, which goared him so, that he died of his Wounds.

A Person of Quality too violently acted, and influenced by some of high Dignity, set himself to prosecute the Nonconformists that lived within his reach; and one time making a visit to a great Peer, did make too much sport with his Employment, saying, He had been persecuting the Godly Party; and among other Stories, representing them very odiously, he told this Passage, full of Blasphemy (and I doubt not as full of Falshood in those who told it him) in a Prayer, speaking to the Divine Majesty; *Thou art like George on Horse-back, thou seemest to come, but dost not come.* If it had been true and certain such Language had been used, certainly it should not have been repeated with Pleasure. His Coach-man did not make Expedition in bring his Coach to him: then said he, *My Coach-man is like George on Horse-back, he seems to come, but doth not come.* Thus making Sport; but in his return home, he was taken so ill, that he betook himself to his Chamber and in his Bed, and all the Prayers and Tears of his Friends could not prolong his Days, Death made speed and would not tarry.

Now it is time to bring home these Examples and present them to the view, and lay them not at the Doors, but before the Hearts and Consciences of three sorts of Persons, at this time too deeply, if not too heartily engaged in the Suppression of Nonconforming Protestants.

1. Those Magistrates that serve the Design.
2. Those of the Clergy that with or approve it.
3. Those Under-Officers and Agents, that go under too dishonourable a Name, in my conceit, to come in the same Page, or stand a-brest in my Division, with Magistrates and Ministers.

1. Of the Magistrates.

Noble and worshipful Gentlemen, I made bold in a former Plea, to address to you on the behalf of my Reverend Brethren, so I call them, because Christians, and because they are Protestants and Divines of Age and Learning: I account their Sufferings to be a great breach upon our

Protestant Body, a weakening of our Strength, a Blot upon our professed Chastity, no Service to the King or Church, but a rejoicing and a Service to their and our professed Enemies: it can be for no Man's Interest, Profit, or Honour to trouble the Servants of Christ, and to provoke his Wrath, which if it be kindled but a little — *Blessed are all they who put their trust in him.*

I may better speak in the Cause of others, than in mine own; and when I plead for them, I really believe, I offer you a Service that should not be despised, but favourably construed, and kindly taken; for I do warn you to have nothing to do with the Ruine of just, good, peaceable, holy, learned Men and Christians, and the King's good Subjects, yea, and some of your best Friends; for I do believe, they make many Prayers to God for you, to turn your Hearts, to save your Souls; and their Intercessions for you, are as one piece of Defence between you and harm. If these are my Mistakes, I am mistaken; and if I am altogether mistaken, I beseech you pardon the Mistake, and accept the Affection, Respect, Honour, and Good-will I bear you; for I would serve you without a Mistake if I could. But verily, I think, I am pretty right in my Judgment of this Case; and have the concurrent sense of some of them, or of their Relations, who have been active in the same way in which you now appear.

You are not all of a Mind and Temper; you act from various Dispositions or Habits of Mind; and these are as various, as those observed by that ancient Christian-Cicero, *Lactantius*, of the Prosecutors of the Christians. *Accepta enim Potestate pro suis moribus quisque servavit* — 'Some for too great a fear, have ventured to do more than they were commanded: Others out of a private Hatred of their own against just Men; some from a natural Cruelty of their own; some that they might please, and by this Office (or Service) prepare (or secure) a way for their Advancement; some ran headlong to kill, as one of *Phrygia*, who burnt all the People with the Conventicle or Meeting-place it self, (*Lactan. de Justitia*. l. 5. c. 11. p. 420. *Lugd. Bat.* 1660.) Thus Men were moved of old. From what of these Principles or Affections they now move, concerns them to enquire, before that measure which they mete to others, be measured to them again. Generous Minds should be locked up against the Intrusion of Temptation, to bring in such low Affections as these are, by which a Christian Heart is more profaned than the Temple was by *Pompey's* bringing in of the *Gentiles* into it: these are too base Affections for such as hope for Heaven.

You say we have a Law, and according to that the *Nonconformists* ought to suffer, and you are impowered to execute the Laws indifferently.

This.

This was the strowed Presence of the Jews to be so urgent with Pilate to crucify our Saviour: *John 19. 7. We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to dy:* Whereas he ought not to have been accounted a Blasphemer, in saying, He was the Son of God, for he was so; and if he had been a Blasphemer, by which of their Laws did they cry, *Crucify, crucify him?* Give me leave I beseech you to speak freely. I have not in all my Narratives touch'd upon any that I know now to have his Sword drawn in this fresh Assault; but have related things past to be your Admonitions and Examples, that I may not provoke, but profit you.

I grant you have a Law, and I believe many of you do with there were no such Law, and many are weary and cautious, sparing and fair in the Execution of it. But I beseech you once again to keep to the Scope of the Law, and to the Law it self, as relating to the Scope, and there will be no need of Tumults to guard any of your Persons to find out and disperse the Meetings, nor such fear of you from the Nonconformists. That Preaching and Praying which contains matter of Sedition, Rebellion and Insurrection, and is expressly of that nature without forced and uncharitable Construction, or perverted logical Inferences, are the only Exercises under the name of *Religious Exercises*, which you can justly punish. Reading Scripture, singing Psalms are Religious Exercises, and the matter of them undoubtedly godly. Preaching and Praying are as undoubtedly God's Ordinances, as the Scripture is God's Word. It is manifest Impiety to forbid these, any of these, or all of them in one Assembly, as it would be to obliterate any part of Holy Writ, or to cancel any Divine Law. It is Impiety, and not to be supposed that any Christian Legislators should make a Law to prohibit any Religious Duty or Exercise in it self considered; and if any of you think you may punish Preachers or Hearers, for such undoubted Religious Exercises, you sin against God, and all the Laws in the World cannot justify your so doing; for no Law of Man can defend any Man in sinning against the Law of God.

It is true that the Preface of a Law is not a Law, and the Scope of the Law is not the Law; but as the Scope of the Law expressed in the Preface, was the Reason and Intention of the Law-makers; and all the general Words in the Law, were formed with reference to the Scope (or else they were not made as rational Means conducing to its End; no more than it would be to forbid speaking, that there might be no swearing). Any Exercise of Religion, that tends to Sedition, Rebellion, and to move Insurrection; is so far punishable, as it is abused and perverted to that unsufferable End; or else you punish Religious Duties absolutely taken, because by such Numbers, or by Persons above sixteen Years of Age, in such Numbers; and then you'll say, it is not religious.

Duties that is punished, but the prohibited number, of above four besides the Family. But then again, the number absolutely taken doth not make a Crime, or should not, but as it is supposed to foment Sedition. For, why shall it be unlawful for twenty, forty, or a hundred of divers Families to meet in one Place for Religious Exercises, any more than for some noble and great Family, of some one Noble Man or Gentleman, or Boarding-house, which hath so many Persons in it, to meet together in one Room for Religious Duties?

Besides this, it is clear that the Clauses in the Act against Conventicles, refers to Such an Assembly as is prohibited in the beginning of the Act: for these words, *Such Offender, so convicted, such Offence, like Offence, such Meeting, such Conventicle*, is repeated twelve or thirteen times in the body of the Act. Now such relates to a Meeting before described and forbidden: *Such Meeting* we find in the beginning of it. The Act is for providing further and more speedy Remedies against growing and dangerous Breaches of *sedition, Seditious, and other disloyal Persons, who under pretence of tender Conferences, have, or may at their Meetings contrive Insurrections*.

Be it enacted, En. That if any Person of the Age of sixteen Years, or upwards, being a Subject of this Realm, shall be present at any Assembly, Conventicle, or Meeting (mark the words) under colour or pretence of any Exercise of Religion, in other manner than according to the Liturgy, and Practice of the Church of England, in any place within the Kingdom of England, Dom. W. or T. of B. upon T. at which Conventicle there shall be five Persons or more, one and besides those of the same Household, or if it be in a House, Field, or place where is no Family inhabiting, Then where any five Persons or more assembled, or as in said, En. shall and may be lawful to and for any one or more Justices of Peace upon Proof of such Offence. Which Proof is either by Confession of the Party, or Oath of two Witnesses, or notorious Evidence and Constancy of the Bail, to make Record, &c.

Will you cut off the Act from the Preface, or have you no regard to the words of the Act, *under colour or pretence of any Exercise of Religion*? then you take no notice of the Description of the Persons who make up an unlawful Assembly or Conventicle. Here are three things to make a Conventicle: 1. The Persons, Number and Age, called *seditious, Seditious, and disloyal Persons*. 2. An Assembly of above four of these, under colour and pretence of any Exercise of Religion, over and above the Family.

Where observe, 1. What is implied or suspected, (say, it must be evident, because it must be proved by Witnesses, or Confession of the Party,

or notorious Evidence or Circumstances of the Fact) that some ill Con-
 tinuance is carrying on, under colour or pretence of any Exercise of Reli-
 gion.

2. It is said, any Exercise of Religion, that is, as I conceive any parti-
 cular Duty, as reading a Chapter, singing Psalms, as well as Preaching,
 Praying, administering Sacraments, or Discipline: whereby it is clear, the
 Law forbids not any Exercise, no, not preaching in it self, but the colour
 and pretence of it, in clear and exprefs words.

3. In other manner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the
 Church of England. The meaning of which is ambiguous, and commonly
 interpreted, if any Exercise of Religion be without the Liturgy, and then
 it is ambiguous, to say, in other manner than, &c. when the meaning is,
 without the Liturgy. The Nonconformists have no other manner of
 Reading, Singing, &c. than is usual in the Practice of the Church of Eng-
 land; nor other manner of Preaching, than what is practised in the
 Church of England. This is the meeting of such ill Persons, that abuse
 Religion as a colour and pretence, to conceal desperate and pernicious
 Practices in any other manner than according to the Liturgy. And such
 Persons, such Offences, such Meetings so convicted, are subject to such Pe-
 nalties.

Now then Gentlemen, keep to the Laws, and spare none. But then
 consider; why have any acted so, as to make no difference between sedi-
 tious Sectaries and disloyal, and peaceable loyal Persons? why have they
 not distinguished, as the Act doth, between any substantial, innocent Reli-
 gion, and the colour or pretence of it? but taking it in the lump, it hath
 been punished, without inquiry after the Leaven of Sedition that leavened
 the Lump.

I do heartily wish this may fall into the Hands, and upon the Heart of
 that Minister of Justice, who drawing out Evidence from an impudent
 Informer, to prove an Information, asked him this Question, *Wassthy
 Preaching there?* If the Informer could have truly sworn, that there was
 Preaching there; let the Examiner, as one that shall be judged in the great
 day, think before-hand, how Preaching (not tainted with Sedition, or ten-
 ding to any Evil to the State) deserved to come in as a Crime, or the Prea-
 cher punishable for it. Certainly Preaching should be judged a Duty en-
 courageable and not punishable in a Christian Judicature. It should be
 birth to a Christian Ear, to hear Preaching, an Ordinance of God, and the
 Power of God to Salvation, enquired after as a Crime! I wish God may not
 lay it to any Magistrate's Charge, You have fined and imprisoned my Ser-
 vants, for preaching and hearing my Word; and I wish that every such one
 may judge himself for it, and repent before he go to God's Judgment.

Why

Why have any punished the singing of a Psalm in a Meeting, which was in the Metre and Tune practised by the Church of England? Why, when the Informer being present, and making the fifth Man, have the rest suffered as a Conventicle, there being but four above the Family, and the Informer the fifth?

Is there no way to execute a Law, but by a violation of the Law? What Law is there for tearing up Free-Holds, pulling down Houses, tearing up Seats? Which looks liker a Rout or Riot? a Company of Boys and rude Fellows, some with Swords, and others with Staves and Clubs about the Streets, to break up Meetings of Men without Arms, and Women and Children? What Law is there for executing Warrants on the Lord's-Day? There is one against it. What Law is there for Justices to give out Warrants, that lie dormant in Officers hands, empowering them to break up Meetings that are foreseen, or foretold to be? What Law requires a Justice to be an Informer? to break open Doors at unreasonable Hours, to fright Women with Child, and others into Fits, when there is not so much as any notorious Evidence or Circumstance, much less Oath of any Witness or Witnesses?

Now let us come to the Proof: What is a notorious Evidence or Circumstance of Fact? Of what Fact? Of any Religious Exercise without the Liturgy; that's the Fact: Now what is the notorious Evidence of it? Not a Tone, nor a Voice, nor such a Number; nor Preaching, nor any other Exercise of Religion, can be notorious in it self, that it is such a Fact, but to them that are present at it. Such Exercise may be, and yet not differing from the manner of the Church, by its own Evidence, but to him or them to whom it is evident upon the place, or by Oath of two Witnesses. But why shall two infamous Witnesses carry it from the contrary Testimony of more than two, and more credible? Because it is for the King? No Lie, nor Perjury, nor Oppression of the King's Subjects, is for the King, but against his Honour, Wealth, and Strength. Why will Magistrates employ, set on, and encourage infamous and known lying Fellows? How can they believe them, that were not Witnesses, nor present in the Meeting from the beginning to the end, but lay skulking at a distance, that went scouting up and down; that took Names upon Trust and Hear-say; and that cannot tell the Text, nor one Sentence of the Sermon, nor who the Preacher was?

Here Regard is to be had to the Credibility of Persons on both sides: Are there not as honest, just, conscientious Persons as Informers? I hope, I know there are: why may not they be believed, and the Parties relieved upon their Appeals? Is it a sufficient Reason, because they swear for the King? If for the King as a Party, then Judges judg between Party and Party,

Party, and in doing Justice against the King's Cause as a Party, they establish his Throne as a King, and thereby act for him: If it be for the King's Profit, it supposes the Right to lie on his Side first, or else it is no Profit, but a Worm in his Exchequer. What other Reason is there why these Witnesses must be believed? Is it because they swear positively in the Affirmative? Because some that construe Things in their favour, do take this for a Rule, that a Negative cannot be proved, therefore their positive Swearing cannot be disproved? I do think it worthy a few Words to explain it, which may help Mens Understanding: therefore I say, A Negative cannot be proved, because it is grounded (pardon the Word) upon a Non-entity; that is, There is no such thing; therefore such a thing cannot be affirmed and proved. Truth is the positive in Being and Reality, and therefore Truth can only be affirmed. In a Contradictory, one Side can only be true. If one Man swear a Lie never so positively, he positively swears a Negative or a Privative: He that swears the Truth, tho it be contrary to an affirmative Falshood, or Lie, swears a Positive. Now when an Informer, or any other Witness, swears positively so and so, and another swears the contrary, the Judge and Jury, (who are Judges of Evidence) must know, that he that swears Truth, he only swears the Positive, and the other the Negative; and therefore in this case they must use their Reason, to compare the Credit of the Persons that swear on both Sides: and if there be an equality in them, they must have regard to Circumstances, and find out what Evidence they can. Let Juries take heed of the Guilt of a false Verdict, when they are tempted and deceived, that it is for the King: They are to proceed according to the Credit of the Evidence, and then it is for the King, when they proceed according to Truth: Then you are Loyal Subjects, when you act according to Law, for Law is the Rule of Loyalty.

It is too apparent, that too many now do study, by what Laws Protestants may be brought into Trouble; as *Lactantius* reports, that *Domitianus* (*Ulpianus de Officio Proconsulis, lib. 7.*) *rescripta nefaria collegit, ut doceretur quibus penis affici oporteret eos, qui se cultores Dei confiterentur.* [*De Justitia, lib. 5. p. 491.*]

Honoured-Sirs, you have a Law, and Laws; keep strictly to them, and do not your selves transgress them: You have Laws against others; keep to those Laws, and you will not give Dissenters such just cause to complain, as they have. You have Laws, and you have a Religion too, in great danger from the Execution of them at this time, and in the usual manner, if the Judgment of a great part of them, who had Ability, to judge, and Power to declare their Judgments, be of any value; You have

have a Law, but keep to your Places, lest you give great advantage to them that complain of illegal Sufferings.

Many of you do not like the Laws, but besides the Law, there is a Penalty, and an hundred Pounds will make a Hole in some Justices Estates, especially in Towns and Cities, who are Tradesmen: But keep strictly to the Laws, to these Laws, and you may venture your Penalty. If you were not too forward, or too feaful, the Informers would fear to come to your Houses, as Men afraid to be sent to the House of Correction, or a Goal; and you may easier defeat them, than they recover a Forfeiture upon you, with all their Arts of Falshood and Perjury: But if you value your Forfeiture, above the preservation of the Protestant Religion, in a great part of it, how will you be able to suffer the Loss of all against Popery?

And lastly; Consider seriously the manifold Manifestations of God in these Things: The Judgments of God are rarely and seldom Executed, because of his Patience and Mercy, but they are sometimes, that they may be noted, and that Men may fear. *The Lord is known by the Judgments which he executeth.*

This may be called *Panaticism*, and vain Observations of weak and superstitious Minds: But as it is a Contempt of God, not to observe his Providences, and his Judgments; so Christians in all Ages, have made and given Observations of God's Hand stretched out against them that have persecuted his People, or helped forward their Affliction.

You know how unwillingly *Pontius Pilate* was drawn to deliver our Saviour. Who ever accounted *Gen. fo. Vossius* below the most learned of his Age? He gives this Censure of *Pilate's* Act. (*Harmon. Evang. l. 2. c. 3. p. 246.*) *Cujus injustitie gravis a Deo pœna fuit*: For he who suffered himself to be carried with the Accusations of the Jews, which he knew to be false, so far as to adjudg innocent Christ to Punishment; he also himself, circumvented with the false Accusations of the Jews, was banished to *Vienna*; as *Josephus*, *Lib. 18. of his Antiq. c. 7.* Neither did *Herod* escape unpunished, who professed he found nothing worthy of Death in Christ, for his cruel handling of him; for he was (tho for a far different Cause) by *Caligula* banished unto *Liont*. *Joseph. Antiq. l. 18. c. 25.*

This might be sufficient to discourage any from being forward, or inciting and promoting this Work, either by Threats or Promises, and to make the unwilling resolute in their Averseness and Forbearance. He that said, *Remember Lot's Wife*, doth expect that all Men should read what God's hand writes upon Examples, and declares by his Publick Judgments. *Tertullian* observes to *Scapula*, the Publick Judgments of God for the Persecution of the Christians; such as not gathering their Harvests, the for-

mer Years Rain, and the Fires which hung over the City of Carthage all the Night; they knew what they threatened, who saw them, and what the Thunders sounded: *Omnia hæc sunt imminentis Re Dei signa.* 'These are all Signs

of the Wrath of God hanging over our Heads: And they shall feel the universal and last or utmost Wrath of God, who do otherwise interpret these Examples of his: For that Sun in the Assembly at *Utica*, when the Light was almost put out, was a Prodigy, and could not be from any ordinary Eclipse, being then in its

Altitude. — We can also lay before thee the latter Ends of several Presidents, who near their Death have remembered that they sinned, in vexing the Christians. *Vigellius Saturninus*, who first drew Sword against us, lost his Eye-sight. *Claudius Terminus* in *Cappadocia*, taking it ill his Wife turned to our Sect, dealt cruelly with the Christians, was in his Palace destroyed alone by Pestilence, after that Lice had creep'd from him while alive. *Let no Man know this*, said he, (keep this secret) *lest the Christians rejoice in their Hope.* — And they who seem to themselves to be unpunished, shall come into the Judgment of God. Thus that ancient Writer, *Tertullian*.

Ecclesiastical Historians do not pass by particular Judgments upon particular Persons, nor general Calamities, such as Darkness upon the Face of the Earth, the Noise of Thunder, not from Heaven, but the roaring of the Earth, Earthquakes, opening of the Ground, swallowing up Houses, and many died with the Terror of it; Cities drowned and overthrown by the Sea, the Pestilence, and other Calamities. Hath not God called us to turn to him by many Judgments? And is this a Sign of our turning to him, that Religion is exposed to Scorn, and truly religious Men are least endured; and Dissenters from Humane Inventions, and unnecessary Things, are persecuted; and Dissenters from God, and his plain and open Laws, and the very serious Profession of Christianity, are too commonly loved? Is this the Effect of our Repentance? Yea, what Zeal against Dissenting Christians to root them up, to punish Preaching, Praying, singing Psalms, mutual Edification expressly exhorted to by the Apostle, *Col. 3. 16.* And instead of Chrillian Communication and Converts, what a lewd Generation of *Damnmens*, that Health-Prosperity, and Destruction to Persons, according to their Interests and Passions? The professed Devotees of prophane Observances and Irreligion carry the Day, and keep the Well, while sober and religious Persons are driven into Corners, and can-

not enjoy them with quiet. We have heard of Swords, and Blood drawn at Play-Houses, or by occasion of them; and was ever any of them indicted for Riots? But how common a Practice hath it been to indict peaceable Men and Women, and bind them to the Behaviour, for undoubted Christian Exercises?—God hath spoken by Wars with a Nation of our own Profession, by Pestilence, by many dreadful Fires, by raging Fevers, and other Diseases not commonly known, in which God hath not long debated with wretched Mortals, but taken them away suddenly. He hath contended by great Decays in Mens Estates, by hideous Darkneſs, by seorching consuming Heat; and lastly, by pouring down immoderate Rains, (will neither Fire melt us, nor Rain soften us, no, not so much as into one Fast?) And is this a sign that God is attended to, and his Voice understood, and his Warning taken, that the Mouths of his Servants shall be stopp'd? And what tho God hath remembred Mercy, in giving us great Plenty, after both excessive Heat and immoderate Rains; doth not he expect to be entreated, and that we should amend our Ways? Shall this go for a Reformation, that they who cannot serve God in a publick Station, shall not serve him in private Meetings? Or that a more plain Way of Worship shall not be endured in publick? And many who for fashion sake cry up the Publick Service, do not live by it; and severely punish others for not coming to Church, who are not so often there themselves as they might be.

Be pleased but to look about you, and see how many Gentlemen are either cut off, or taken away: 'How many Noble and Gentlemen's Families are fatherless and motherless! Houses shut up, or

— *Quanto major fuerit
persecutionis injuria, tanto
et justior fiat et gra-
vior pro persecutione vin-
dicta.* Cyprian. contra
Demetrian.

*Ruinis regum, jac-
tus opum, dispendio mi-
litum, diminutione ca-
strorum.* — Idem ib.

a Passage in at the Back and Kitchen-Doors, into a cold Kitchen, and an empty House! And do you think this is the way to live long upon Earth, and bring down a Blessing upon your selves, and your Posterity, to discountenance or to extirpate the Professors of Christian Religion? Could but the Dead advise you, they would advise you to be truly pious, and piously zealous, to encourage them that mind the Way to Heaven, and to hedge up their Way with Thorns, that transgress, and are extravagant out of the Ways of God: They

would tell you, that many that keep the other Side of the Thorn-Hedge, (to use the Words of an eminent Guide in that Way) do meet at the Journey's End. But the Dead speak not; and it will be too late, your Work will be done, before you can go to advise with them. O hearken to the Voice of God in his Word, in his Judgments, in your many Examples,

and

and in your own Consciences! Can you discern a Judgment of God, when you see it at another Man's Door? Must it come in at your own Doors? must it come up Stairs? must it come to your Bed-Chamber? and must it hinder the Success of all Physicians upon you, and follow you to your Graves, before you take a reverent Notice of it.

I beseech you be not displeased with me for telling you what I think: The Curse of disobedient Children, the Curse of Swearing and Drunkenness, and many other Impieties; the Curse of Poverty, and Necessity to mangle, if not to alienate Estates, comes into many Houses, because they would not have the Blessing of *Obed-Edom*, by entertaining the Ark of God: And do not you in your Consciences know, (if ever you do reflect) that they only, or for the most part, who have bent their Power against Nonconformists, have made but a Pretence of the Church, to disguise their natural Disgust, or close Displeasure against the Practice of religious Duties: For till a Man's own Heart be persuaded and converted to God, he doth not well digest Religion in any other; and indeed he can no more love it in others, than condemn himself; for he must needs condemn the Neglect in himself, that commends the Practice in another. Have you known the most pious and sober Persons, of the most unswayed Reason, to be forward and eager? Have you not traced the Pipes, that have conveyed the Oil of Interest to feed this burning Zeal? Name but one Man that hath stood upon his own Legs, without dependance or expectation; name but one Man, that was wise, sober, temperate, serious, and conscientious in the Practice of Religion, in his own Conversation, and in his Family, that was incoherent from some in Power for their own worldly Aims, that offered himself to this Work: Name but any one that did execute these Laws from a pure Heart to please God, and advance his Honour; and for that one, you may suspect many others, if not know your selves, to act from a private, worldly, if not revengeful Spirit.

Have you not known that Men have taken their Aims and Measures from the Wills of some in higher place? and that have cried up, or beaten down Religion, as it hath opened their way, or stood in it to their designed Projects? The Spring of these violent Motions is as apparent as the *Gnomon* of the Dial, to the Eyes of all those that see what time of day it is. I have been sparing of Names, because I would not offend; yet for warning and example sake, be pleased to observe what they have done and been, that have gone before you: Do you take your selves to be more eminently Loyal than all that are laid aside? Do you think it will be a meritorious Service to suppress Dissenters, else you can be no Friends to *Cesar*, no Sons of the Church? But who is the *Cesar*, or which is the

Church, for whose sake Protestants must be undone? Not the King, nor the Church of England. This is your time of acting your parts. There is as great Reason to be shew'd and tender in Execution of Laws against Dissenters, as to be severe and zealous for other Laws. Take heed! for God is concerned, you, and your Families and Posterities concerned; and as you must account to God, abuse not the Power given you, to serve any Man's Pleasure, or your own corrupt Affections. Take Example by some of as mean Parts as Estates, who have been recommended to Power by for their Forwardness in such Services as these, and have not had the Honour and Comfort of living in their own Houses, yet have been busy in opening, and breaking into, and rifling their religious Neighbours; and by others of large Estates and Fortunes, who eat their Commons not dress'd in their own Kitchens, and have not common Liberty, but what they ask leave, and pay for. Take warning by some, who have run but a very short Race and Course in the pursuit of Dissenters; and have left none of their Children to succeed them in their Power. Take the Example of them, who have seen the Hand of God stretched out against them and their Families, and whose Consciences have applied the meaning of it in the Death of their Children, both of their *Reubens* and *Benjamins*; and that have not prospered in this World, but have fled, and hid, lived and died in a Place that hath no Mark of Honour upon it, but that it is entitled to be the Kings. *Elias* was as great a Fanatick, and Disturber of *Israel*, as any Nonconformist now. Chuse you, Noble Sirs, to be *Obadiab's*, rather to hide the Prophets of the Lord by Fifty, than be either a Captain of a Fifty, or one of the Fifty, that go to take the Prophets. Every one of those unhappy Captains had an Authority as high as yours can be. But *Obadiah* could distinguish between a Prophet and a Rebel; a faithful Preacher, and a State-Disturber, and of all the Captains he was preserved. And so I do heartily pray, that you may be in your Spheres a Terror to evil Doers, and a Praise to them that do well; and so Death and Judgment will be no Terror to you, and you shall have Praise of God. Spare no Teacher of Sedition, but honour them that fear the Lord.

II. I crave leave to write a few Words to my Brethren in the Holy Ministry,

Reverend and beloved Fathers and Brethren, I am not unsensible of my unfitness to write to you, both in respect of my own Inability, and your Prejudice against me. I fear my Charity to my Reverend and worthy Brethren the Nonconformists, have lost me much of yours. I am sorry that any

any have so little of this Oil, that they have not enough for them and me too: But I will adventure to open my Mind a little to you, tho it be the less. I do humbly conceive the Word of Reconciliation is committed to us, and the Holy-Ghost is invocated upon us more than once; and those Graces which all Christians have, we should have more abundantly, and should be as well known by that Grace, by which our Saviour would have his Disciples to be known of all Men, by loving one another, as we are known by our distinguishing Garbs and Habits. We can speak at large of the Excellency of Love and Peace, and of the ill Effects of Enmity and Dissention; and represent and inveigh against Schism, as if that were the Sin against the Holy-Ghost, which shall never be forgiven in this World, nor in that which is to come, or as if that were the Sin unto Death: And indeed it may be called a *Sin unto Death*, in a sence, because it is so contrary to Charity and Peace, and destructive of the Life of Saints, which doth much consist in their Communion. But were we impartial, we should as warmly admonish our own Hearts, to take heed of Schismatical Passions, and excommunicate them from within us, as admonish and cast out others that differ from us. Is there not some Fondness for our own Opinions, and Self-Love in the Praise of Unity, and Reproof of Schism? For most of the Discourses I have heard or read of late Years upon this great Subject, have been to condemn or censure all that differ from us. We would have all Men think, not only charitably, but well and honourably of us: but if we have any Charity for them that are out, we are very careful that it be done in secret, and without sound of Trumpet. I am far from extending this to all the Conforming Brethren, but to them, and them only, who from Mis-information received an obstinate Prejudice, or Policy, are profuse in the Expence of Words and Passions. We do take it extreme ill from some Nonconformists, that they censure and speak ill of us, that they revile, and render us as scandalous and odious, as ready to decline and apostatize; but really are not the hottest of them matched, if not beaten out of the Field? I may be thought to have an Intimacy with them, and a Partiality for them, whereas my Acquaintance is very little; but as far as it doth extend, I must do them this Justice, that they are of a very loving, healing, and uniting Spirit. I have heard them speak very well of good Conformists, and as free to acknowledge the Grace of God in them, as in those of their own Persuasion, and as ready to hold Terms of Friendship with us. Have not we given them as good Office, by doing what they cannot do, as they have given us, by not doing what we have done? they have lost by our Compliance, but we have gained by their Non-conformity.

The Conformist's Fourth Plea

conformity, except, as they are often told, we lose by their means among the People, but we gain among the Princes by it; and do we love them so ill, that we would not have the People love them? Alas! what a peckled Bird is a Nonconformist in a Princes Court, and in most noble Families, at a publick Meeting! What! is a little Popularity grudg'd them? I am grieved to think what a Crime it is to be consciencious. Certainly, if they are not consciencious; they have not common Sense; and the opprobrious Jeers and Sarcasms with which they have been treated, have not sufficiently set out their Folly, if they suffered great Losses, to gain the cold Breath of Popularity, which would sooner starve than refresh them. Who should be so compassionate, courteous, officious, loving and peaceable towards them, as we who are Ministers? Who should better know the Darknes and Weakness, the various Workings of the Mind, than we? Who should more candidly use them that dissent from us, than we, who know our many Dissents from our selves, at several times, and the same Points? Who should allow more to the scrupulous than we, who know the Weakness of our own Light, and ascribe much to the Authority of Conscience? Conscience is no Sovereign, but Conscience is next and immediately under Christ the King. Conscience is subject to Mistakes, but its Judgment is of highest Authority next under God, and to be controlled by none but him. It is Hypocrisy and Impiety to pretend it; and it is too great a Boldness, and Intrusion into the Throne of God, to judg that they do but pretend Conscience: And very ill Service is done to Christianity, and great Encouragement is given to Impiety, by some Mens arrainging Dissenters for a bare pretence of Conscience, by making the dissolute act as securely, as if there were really no such Power

It is suspicious, that some Mens Conformity is ill built, who say, That a Claim of Conscience is not to be allowed; as if Inferiours were to lay that aside, or we can never attain to Peace; as if that were to be resign'd up to Rulers.

as that of Conscience. Is it not a Word too common, *Hang 'em, hang 'em, there is none good, no Trust to be given to Men that pretend to Conscience?* Who should better understand what Unity and Consent is necessary between Christians, and what Condescension and Forbearance is necessary? Who should better understand the differing Practices of ancient Churches, than we? And that there is no perfect Unity, till we come to perfect Light and Grace? We should know that there are hard things in Conformity. Subscription and Conformity is the easiest thing in the World, if there were no more required, than that they will not rebell, but support the Government, and be peaceable under it: If this be all, tell them plainly, in these or like plain Words, and then see if they will refuse.

But

But to impose upon us *Maximes of State*, the Determination of Problems, is to bring many Men into the Clouds, tho others get near the Sun, and have Light enough to read their meaning. We should know the Education of a Scholar, the Charge of Studies, the Necessities of Families, and how harsh a thing it is to be too much indebted to Charity since all things have ceased to be common. We should upon many Considerations commiserate them, and their Families. We should be hospitable, and not forgetful to entertain Strangers. How comes it then to pass, that it is such a Crime in some Mens Eyes, to be courteous to a dissenting Brother? and his very Neighbourhood is become intolerable, especially if he preach the Word?

In a word, as I said before, we that preach the *Word of Reconciliation*, should be of reconcileable Spirits and Tempers. Proud and erroneous Pharisees were given to cast out of Synagogues. It is a Sectarian Spirit, to make Sects, or to use a sound Christian as if he were a Sectary. The Spirit of Sanctification is necessary to all that will be saved, and for us more than others: We declare we have received that Spirit before Ordination, when the Holy-Ghost is invoked, and we are sent with Authority from him.

Give me leave to bring to your Minds the excellent Words of Cyprian — *Idcirco & in columba venit Spiritus Sanctus, simplex animal & latum, non felle amarum, non morsibus seorum, non unguium laceratione violentum: Hospitia humana diligere, unius domus consortium nosse, cum generant, simul filios edere; cum comasunt, volantibus invicem coherere; communi conversatione vitam suam degere, oris osculo concordiam pacis agnoscere, lege circa omnia unanimatis implere.* — *Quid facit in pectore Christiano luporum feritas, & canum rabies, & venenum testuale serpentum, & cruenta sevitia bestiarum?* — He speaks of the Catholick Church, in that excellent Book, *De Simplicitate Prelatorum*.

Barbarity and Cruelty rages in the Wilderness without the Church: How unbecoming a Scholar, yea, a Man? a Minister, yea, a Christian, is it, to imbitter the Lives of them that are cast out of their Churches; and Houses, and Free-Holds, and cast down to be trampled under foot? To exasperate Magistrates against them! Is it to our Honour to put on the Magistrates Spurs? Is Whispering and Backbiting a Grace in us? Are Invectives, Sermons? I do not marvel that some Men do not pray before their Sermons, when I consider what their Sermons have been; but do much more marvel, that after their Sermons they have repeated an excellent Prayer out of the Common-Prayer, *That the Word might sink into our Hearts, &c.*

There.

There are two Things which are taken exceeding ill from you, by conforming Gentlemen, and Members of our Church: Your meddling with State Affairs in the Pulpit, and your exciting the Magistrates to prosecute Protestants; by which you do not save your selves, nor gain others. Have not some of you driven away, and lost your own Auditors, by your Invectives against Protestant Nonconformists of longer standing in the Church of Christ, and that have gone through those Trials, and stood fast, which you have not felt as yet, and whom you ought to honour as Fathers and Brethren? It can never be a comfortable Day to you, if you lived to see them all used as you would have them used. How unworthy a thing is it in a Minister, to go next way to a Magistrate, and inform and incense him against your Brethren, (so you should esteem them) for a private Discourse, which had nothing of Danger, but some pleasantness in it? Some have been sensible of this afterwards, and ashamed. How zealous an Act is it in a Minister, to importune a Magistrate, time after time, to drive a Minister out of his own Family, out of a Town, or into a Prison? Must that Man be clear in his own Soul, that cannot abide the Neighbourhood of a Nonconformist, because he thinks himself condemned by his Resolution and Constancy? Whether was the more Christian Act and Temper, to molest a Nonconformist living, or to beg his Pardon dying, for an unfriendly, uncharitable, perfidious Carriage? How uncomfortable is it for a Minister, to disturb, and procure the Punishment of a few dissatisfied Persons, by which they are cut off from him, and grow and propagate? They encrease, and he grows more discontented and troublesome, and in his declining Age outlives their Love, and his own Honour, not among them alone; and to sink and fall in the Esteem and Honour, which once he had out of the Confines of his own Parish; and his Labours, once esteemed, are become fruitless. I do not know, that kindling of Fires is any part of the Office of an Evangelical Priest. I conceal Names, and proceed no further.

Some of you are zealous for the Laws, for all, and for a full Obedience of all Persons to all Laws: But, my Brethren, as going to Law is the last Remedy to be used by an injured Person; so *omnia prius tentanda*, by us, in Cases wherein we may appeal to, or call in the Assistance of the Law. Have we stated the Differences? have we argued with the Spirit of Love with them? have we prayed to God for them? Have we given no just Offence, either by bitterness or negligence? Have we become all things to them, to gain them? After all means, have we exercised Forbearance? and begun with the first Offices of Love, and then risen higher and higher? But as soon as Men come into a divided Parish, to present them, or complain to Justices, is to begin where we should not end without

extreme

extreme unwillingness and trouble. Our better selves know this Method of Proceeding. To correct by Warrants, is not punishing and converting. It is commonly said, That Executioners of the Law are to act, and not to judge, or use their own Discretion: No! why then what's the reason that wise and discreet Men are at any time put into Office?

I have answered what Objections I met with before: I shall but touch one common Grievance, which is, (besides the general Accusation of Schism and Separation, and other Matters of Debate) that either some of your Parishioners go abroad to hear, or some of the Nonconformist Preachers preach in your Parishes. In this Case there are abundance of Circumstances, that aggravate or diminish, and by consequence alter it. If the Nonconformist Minister be an able good Man, I think we should be glad and thankful for his Pains, and live (as in some very great Places some eminent Conformists and Nonconformists do) in great Love and Agreement, and both are edified in Love. You know, St. Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, tho out of Envy to him. But hath Necessity brought Preachers among us, or carried away careful Souls from us? then who is most to blame? Suppose there were two Churches in your Town, you are not grieved that all hear you not in that Case. I know the great Convenience of Parish-Bounds, both for Ministers and People, especially where Parishes are thick; and People should be tender how they leave a painful profitable Parish-Minister sent unto them: And I have heard, some Nonconformist Preachers have persuaded People to hear them; and Nonconformist Hearers, that could not in Conscience forsake good Men, if they had such in their Parishes. Others are of another Temper, weak and subject to Passions. But in this Case, as I should labour conscientiously to be a profitable Minister: so I should not be a Hindrance to the greater Profit of Souls elsewhere: I should not think them to be lost to me, that are gained to Christ by another Minister. But this Complaint is made against some Conforming Ministers, that they draw too. The Answer was home and blunt, of a Conforming Preacher, either given or sent to a Neighbour-Minister, who was aggrieved his People left him, and went to the Neighbour-Minister: *I preached them dinner, and let him preach them home again, if he will.* If our Hearts were set upon our Work, and if God's Glory was uppermost, and Self-denial nourished, these things would be better borne. The Dissenters are either peaceable in their Dissents, modest in their different Opinions, sincere in their Ways; or they are of a Sectarian Spirit: To the one the Spirit of Meekness, Love, Forbearance, is best suited, and we may live together with Comfort and Edification; to the other, Severity is an improper Cure, for it makes him the more a Sectary. We are to gain, and to gather, and to use all Means that are proper

proper, and effective of that End. Are there not in all our Parishes, ignorant, profane, careless Sectaries from God, and his holy Body? What Imprudence would it be, to bring them all under Fines and Troubles? They should be a greater Grief to us, undoubtedly, than honest scrupulous Souls, that seek the way to please God. If Nonconformity be such an Eye-sore, let us take heed that we do not make Nonconformists, and not blame them so much as our selves, if they seek to mend themselves elsewhere. It is certain, *High Conformists made Nonconformists, in 1662*. And it is too evident, that Conformists do make many still. I am persuaded, if St. *Augustin* had been alive in our Days, he would never have persuaded the Magistrate to make such Laws, nor any of the Fathers before him, much less the holy Apostles; their Salutations expressed the Largeness of their Hearts, and their Catholick Love to the *Corinthians*, among whom were great Divisions; to the *Galatians* and *Colossians*, among whom were some very erroneous; So did their Benedictions; *Peace be to the Brethren, and Love, with Faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Ephes. 6. 23. *And Grace be wish all them that love our Lord Jesus in Sincerity.* vers. 2. But to love the Nonconformists into Silence, into Poverty, into Disgrace, into Bonds, is a Love not known to be numbred among the Characters and Signs of Christian Love. If Christ died for them, if any of them love Christ in Sincerity, love them better for Christ's sake; and let not Conformity be a necessary Condition of private Charity, as well as of Ministerial Liberty and Maintenance: (I know it is not so to all, some have Hearts and Hands extended, but) I speak to them whose Zeal, or something else, makes them strict and rigorous. Would you love them if they would conform? Why do you not love some that have conformed, but not above Conformity, after your Pattern and Example? Do you say, it would not trouble you if the Laws were smooth'd and relaxed, but while they are in force, it is fit, and for the Honour of the Government, that they should be executed? But is it likely that those Laws will ever be abated, by your means at least, which you that stile your selves the Church do like so well, as to call and press for their Execution? Why have you so little Honour for those Noble Gentlemen in Parliament, that would have dissannull'd them? Some say, let Authority make what Laws they will, they must be obeyed. If you thought more gentle Laws would do better, why do you so much approve of these? If these be so very good and fit, are we ever like to hear of more moderate, if you can hinder them? Your Zeal is for Uniformity, as well as Government: Why may not another Act be as grateful to you, as this Force? and a new Uniformity as desirable as the old? Then you say, 'Tis dangerous to alter Laws and Establishment. You are zealous against Disorder, that is, to

Ly

say plainly, you would preserve Order, by cutting us asunder into great Divisions. Ruines before the Gates of a Royal Palace, is an unpleasant offensive Sight. The Ruines of the Nonconformists lie at your very Gates: agree with Surveyors, and wise Builders, to raise out of the Ruines a beautiful Fabrick, for Peace and Love to dwell in: If not, know you assuredly, there are those at work, that will lay you as low as you have done them. And who can be assured of the contrary, but that our holy and honest, our good and faithful Brethren, have perswaded, aid'd, and consecrated Common-Goals against our going in? which if we suffer, I wish we may have Grace to endure as they have done; as I am confident we shall be more of the same Spirit with them in such a Case, than now you are.

It cannot be blotted out, that the Clergy and Cardinal of Lorain did instigate and inflame the Magistrates; O that this were a Blot only in Popish Martyrologies! How alien is this from the Mind of our Lord? from the Temper of Christianity? And how unlike a Course to persuade Dissenters, or to quiet the Church? Let this go among the Vertues of the Pharisees, Papists, and Friars. The Words of the Reverend Dr. Burnet, of the best and worst of Clergy-Men, will not encrease his Honour, or procure him love from many of us. I'll make bold to repeat a few of them: *It is observable, the best Clergy-Men have been the most gentle to those that differed from them. But the Unworthy, who know that a good Cause may be spoiled, but is not likely to prevail in their Hands, and will not trouble themselves with the laborious Methods of conquering Errors, are always apt to extreme and cruel Courses, since they know they must prevail with these, or none at all.* History of the Rights of Princes, pag. 257, 258.

The Apostle's Wish, *I would they were cut off that trouble you,* falls somewhere else, and is not to the purpose: it is often produced for. We that are commanded, if we love Christ, to feed his Lambs, are not to set any on to worry straying Sheep. The Holy-Ghost is often invoked upon us, and therefore except the frequent Invocations be in vain, we are to breath out from that, and not another Spirit.

III. A Word to Informers, to whom I have but little to say at present.

How unfavoury is the Memory of Gardiner and Bonner! the former a cunning Informer, both Instigators and Persecutors. An Informer, in the purest Sence of *Index*, is a naughty Man turn'd honest, when he doth it out of abhorrence of evil Counsels, and Conscience of Duty. A King and Kingdom may owe their Preservation to such a Man. But *Quadruplators*, Informers for a fourth part of the Forfeitures, or any other Moie-

ty, for Gold, have been bought through the work of Men. When they have run from one way of Wickedness to another, from Avarice and Necessity, to sell their Souls, Truth, Modesty, and the title of Humanity that is continued with the Face and Shape, then they are to be abominated by wise, just, good, and merciful Men. The Days are evil, when such necessary Evils walk about by Day-light. We read of them in *Plautus's Persa*. *Sat. Tacitus Amal. lib. 3. cap. 25. lib. 4. cap. 30.* and how *Pessus* commanded them to be whipp'd in the Market-place. *Suet. Vesp.*

But the Threatnings of Torments could not move St. Cyprian to inform the Proconsul of his Brethren in Carthage. After other trying Discourses, *Paternus* the Proconsul asked him, Tell me where are those Presbyters which are said to be in this City? St. Cyprian answered, *"Te have well ordained, and the same, that there ought to be no Informers, therefore they ought not to be betrayed by me, but you may find them out; and because ye have judged, that no Man shall accuse himself."* The Proconsul answered, *But I will torment thee, but I will find them out by thee.* The Saint of God answered, *They shall not be destroyed by me.* The Proconsul answered, *It is the Command of the Prince, that the Christians keep no Condemners, nor go to the Burying-Places of the Martyrs; and if any Man transgress, he must be punished with the Sword.* The Saint of God answered, *Do as thou art commanded.* *Passio B. Cypr. per Pontium ejus Diaconum.* By the Canon of the Council of *Elebris*, if any of the Faithful turned Informer, he should be excommunicated.

It was an odious Sight, but much to the Honour of the Justice of those Days, to see *Dr. Dodon* and *Symonds* ride with their Faces to the Horle-Tails, and Papers on their Foreheads, to the Pillory for Perjury; two greater and more worshipful than any of you Informers now. *Dr. Burnet's History of the Reformation, Part 1. Book 3. page 327.*

You are in great Power, and of Use at present, (even your own Friends esteem you a necessary Evil, but indeed some of you are more necessary than necessary) you have many Justices ready at your Call, and a Multitude of Followers at your Heels, in many Places. You make a small Gain of the Godliness of some, of the Scruples and Errors of others: but count all, and then the total will come to worse than nothing. I shall not revile you, but by what I know and hear of some, you are a great Reproach to the Christian Religion, and the Scorn of all Men, that have any Spark of Humanity or Virtue left in them. I have faithfully represented true Histories of your Lives and Deaths of some of your Predecessors, that you may take warning, and peradventure that you may repent: For you have assumed an Office and Calling merely to serve your Lusts, and your Belies, which before had consumed the little Substance you had. (if ever you had

had any.) of your own, or other Men. If you were Baptized, your Godfathers and Godmothers were exhorted to call upon you to hear Sermons: If you had Baptismal Grace, you would do it, and renounce the *World, the Flesh, and the Devil*, all which you serve in this way which you make your Trade, (tho it may be some of you act from a Principle of Malice and Revenge, and that's as bad, if not worse.) At present you act more safely than they that steal and kill; for you pretend the Law is on your side, by which you have taken away from many Reverend Divines their Books, Goods, yea (many times) the very Beds they lay upon, and have left them destitute of Maintenance for themselves, Wives and Children: Yea, you have taken (or caused to be taken) their Persons, and cast them into loathsome Prisons, which have occasioned the Death of some, and the Sickness and Ruin of many of them; and had not Royal Favour interposed, you would never have left, till you had utterly ruined all both Ministers and People. But ere it be too late, I beseech you consider your evil Ways, and repent, else your Reward will be according to your Work. *Dorg* was an Informer against *David*, and the Priests; was one of those that loved Evil more than Good, and Lying rather than to speak Righteousness; and his JUDGMENT was, — *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy Dwelling-Place, and root thee out of the Land of the Living.* Psal. 52. 3, 5. Read 1 Thess. 2. 15.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Expect to be told of the Sufferings of the Loyal Clergy in the Time of War: I have distinguished between a Time of War and Peace, of doleful Havock, and Security and Law; but it is not observed. I say now, that these Ministers I have mentioned in the foregoing Transitions have been Loyal Persons, and in the Times of Usurpation ventured their Lives and Estates for the King's happy Return. I know no Man so disingenuous, as to envy the Care that hath been to preserve *Mr. Huddleston* (a Papist) from the Laws, for his good Service about the King, in his Escape. But no such Care was taken of *Mr. Parson*, *Mr. Heywood*, *Mr. Harrison*, *Mr. Cook* of *Chester*, who was in the Tower when the King was called in, who ventured their Lives and Estates for the King with *Sir George Booth*. *Bishop Walton* would speak civilly to *Mr. Cook*, but told him, he must conform, or he could not help him. How many of the Loyal Clergy were out of Livings or Employments, that did not take their Ease, or enjoy a studious Retirement? How many that loved Preaching, or did cleave

cleave to their Flocks, that did not enjoy some Liberty and Encouragement? I could reckon up many that had Livings in the City, and preached in Churches without any Let; as *Dr. Hal*, (afterwards Bishop of *Chester*) *Dr. Ball*, *Dr. Wild*, (late Bishop in *Ireland*) *Dr. Hardy*, *Dr. Griffith*, *Dr. Peirson*, (now Bishop of *Chester*) *Dr. Mossome*, *Mr. Farringdon*, with many more, besides Abundance in every County. How many of them fled on choice, left their Places, even in the King's Quarters? I could name some of them, when I was a Boy; and now I live where a Minister did voluntarily absent forty Months before he appeared, and in the mean time the Patron presented.

'Tis true, *O. Cromwell*, and his Officers, did once, upon some provocation of a pretended Plot against him, by a Proclamation prohibit their Preaching, keeping Schools, &c. But by the Intercession of that excellent Man Arch-Bishop *Usher*, they had their Liberty again, and preached, and enjoyed their Places all the Time of the Usurpation; and those that were kept out of their Livings, had the Fifth's allowed them. I speak not this to excuse the Evils of those Times, but to shew that the Loyal Clergy found some Mercy and Pity even from Usurpers; and some of them have ingenuously confessed, that they received great Kindness from some in Power then; And shall not we now exceed them in Mercy? Does it not become us to act according to the Christian Law, to *overcome Evil with Good*? and according to the Law of the Land, (the Act of Oblivion) in not reviving the Memory of the Evils of former Days, to the detriment of any Person or Persons?

But now such a Storm is raised, that is ready to carry away not only the Goods, but the Persons of the Nonconformists: I know not the Reason, unless it be because they were too zealous for the Bill of Exclusion. Indeed Sedition and Rebellion is pretended, that they are Enemies to the Government, that they are acting the old Game of *Forty One*, and *Forty Eight*. Let these things be proved, and then let them suffer; I plead not for any such.

Nay, Moderation, and moderate Divines of the Church of *England*, are become now hateful and exposed, and especially if any of us dare be so Bold as to plead for Moderation towards Dissenters; and in so doing we are represented as Enemies to the Church, and threatened to be cast out. 'Tis said, we have reflected on our present Clergy, when it is only such of the Clergy as are over-zealous and fiery, and hinder the Union of Protestants. For if *Phaeton* (as *Dr. Stillingfleet* in his *Iren.* says) *drive the Chariot of the Sun, the World will be soon on Fire*: I mean such in the Church, whose Brains, like the Unicorn's, run out into the length of the Horn; such who have more Fury than Zeal, and yet more Zeal than Knowledge or Moderation.

The

The Generality of our present Clergy are great Admirers of Archbishop Laud, and those that adhered to him; and yet Mr. Hammond L'Estrange (one that was a zealous Church-man, and as keen against the Presbyterians as his Name-sake) hath said more of him and them, than any of the moderate Divines now have, or dare to say of the present Clergy. *Viz.*

Mr. Ham. L'Estrange's History of K. Charles the First, pag. 143, 144.

— His Zeal to Order (meaning Arch-Bishop Laud) carried him thus far, (that is, to put the Canons in Execution) transported him a little too far: The Communion-Table, which formerly stood in the midst of the Church or Chancel, be enjoined it to be placed at the East End, upon a graduated advance of Ground, with the Ends inverted, and a Wooden Transverse of Rails before it, to keep Prophanation off, to which Rails all Communicants were to resort. These things were decent and comely in Contemplation, and had been so in Practice, had they been within the Rule of the Church Directions; but being Anomalous Innovations, and so severely urged, many became thereupon precise, and separated themselves into factious Sidings; nor was this a Schism of an ordinary Size, but grew to that process, to that degree, as, to speak in the Primitive Mode, Altar was erected against Altar, that is, one Bishop impugned and opposed another: For the Bishop of Lincoln (being affronted by one Titly, Vicar of Grantham) published a Tract under a concealed Name, positively asserting therein, That the holy Table anciently did in the Primitive Times, and ought so in ours, according to the Dictates of our Church, stand in gremio, and Nave of the Quire. And as the Arch-Bishop, whilst he so vehemently pursued Order, did a little out-run Authority, so was he unhappy in those he did employ, as Instruments and Subordinates under him, some whereof endeavoured to super-induct many Things, as Will-Worship of their own, and which came within a Mathematical Line of Popery: Nor were they blameless in their Lives, some being vicious even to Scandal, nor of so meek and humble Behaviour as was to be wished, but insolent at a rate so intolerable, as one was bold to say, He hoped to live to see the Day, when a Minister shall be as good a Man as any upstart Jack-Gentleman in England. To such a height of Infatuation had a petty Blaze of mistaken Honour elevated this high Flyer, who in lieu of those frolick Days he looked to see, lived to see that very Hierarchy extirpated, and lived to see himself dethroned of all his Pomp. These Exorbitancies of those Sons of Eli from the Rules of Esbicks, created a very great Disgust against them; and many well enough affected to their Empire, did exceedingly blame their Imperiosity, &c.

FINIS.

The Reader (in regard of the Author's Distance from the Press) is desired to amend what Errata he meets with.